
This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google™ books

<http://books.google.com>

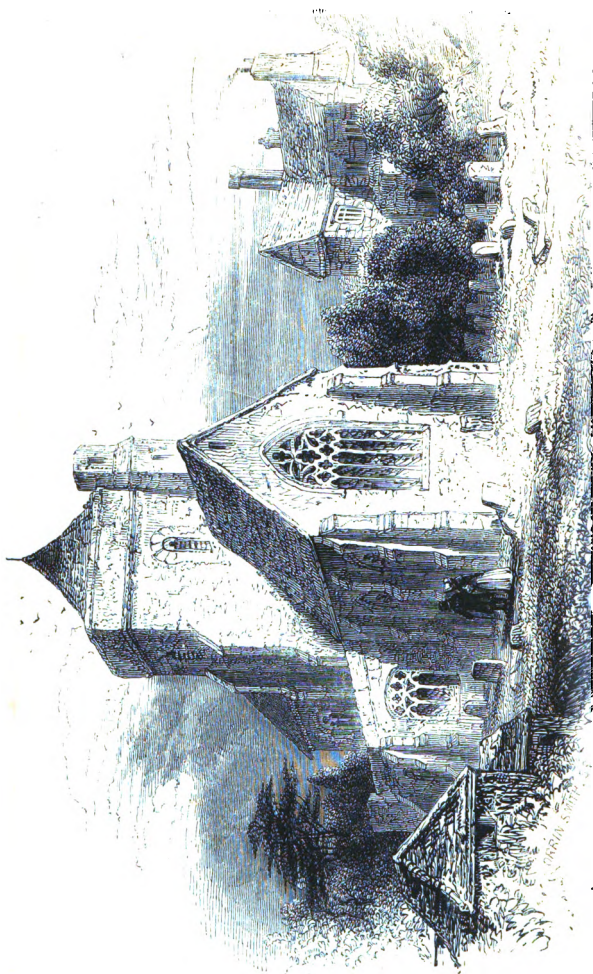




The Gift of

PROF. FORD K. BROWN.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA LIBRARY



Bernard Leslie ;

OR,

A TALE OF THE LAST TEN YEARS.

BY THE

REV. W. GRESLEY, M.A.

PREBENDARY OF LICHFIELD.



LONDON :

**AMES BURNS, 17 PORTMAN STREET,
PORTMAN SQUARE.**

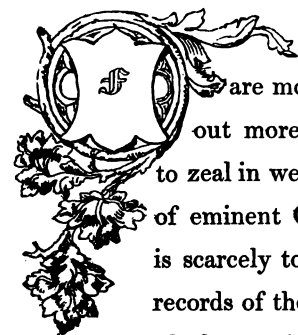
1842.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY LEVEY, ROBSON, AND FRANKLYN,
Great New Street, Fetter Lane.

825G866

OB

INTRODUCTION.



FEW books, perhaps, are more instructive, or hold out more encouraging motives to zeal in well-doing, than the lives of eminent Christian pastors. It is scarcely to be expected that the records of the early Church should have preserved those minute incidents of biographical history, which enable us to see the Christian minister in his daily walk and conversation. Much must there be left to the imagination: and our views of ministerial labours and usefulness must be derived chiefly from the accounts of more recent times. Our own Church furnishes many bright examples: and even the contemplation of the zealous labours

of the ministers of other communities besides our own,—the devoted zeal of Xavier, the piety of De Sales, the munificence of Borromeo, or the daily labours of Oberlin or Neff,—has a powerful efficacy in calling up the spirit of emulation in hearts which require the influence of every available motive to stimulate them to persevering exertion.

The Editor trusts, therefore, that the present volume, containing a somewhat detailed biography of a parochial clergyman of the English Church, will not be unacceptable or unprofitable. How he came by the materials from which the narrative is compiled, it boots not here to tell: some may think, perhaps, that he has ransacked the goodly folio volumes from which Mr. Warlingham draws his copious and valuable stores of incidents.¹ He trusts, however, that many future productions from the same quarter will prove that that source of pleasure and im-

¹ See the first page of the introduction to "Tales of the Village," by the Rev. F. E. Paget.

provement is not yet exhausted. The present volume sets forth in its progress an account of the great change or modification of opinion which has taken place within the last ten years. The clergyman whose course is depicted appears to have entered upon his ministerial duties in the condition of a man biased to no school or party, but prepared to adopt the views to which experience or enlarged knowledge should lead him—a condition which in the present day may seem unnatural, but which was common enough at the time when our narrative commences.



CONTENTS.

CHAP.	PAGE
I. Education—Ordination	3
II. The first Curacy	15
III. Disappointment—the dead Horse	27
IV. The friendly Adviser	37
V. The tempting Offer	51
VI. Baptismal Regeneration	61
VII. The Visitation	77
VIII. Tracts for the Times	87
IX. A new Friend	101
X. On Tradition	113
XI. Value of Church Ordinances	129
XII. Why let not well alone?	145
XIII. Solemn Practical Thoughts	161
XIV. The Sacraments. Regeneration. Repentance. Justification. Imputed Righteousness. Re- ward according to Works	171
XV. The Fanatic	189
XVI. Marriage and Competence	201
XVII. The new Living	213
XVIII. The Case of Dissenters	225

CHAP.	PAGE
XIX. The Threefold Ministry	251
XX. The young Curate	267
XXI. Tendency to Popery :	285
XXII. The later Tracts for the Times	297
XXIII. The Church restored	313
XXIV. Recapitulatory Remarks	327

**His father saw his powers : I'll give, quoth he,
My first-born learning, 'twill a portion be.**

.
**Eager of fame, he read, he thought, he wrote,
Weigh'd the Greek page, and added note to note.**

CRABBE.



CHAPTER I.

The Man of no Party. Education. Ordination.

MY father, though a layman, was a very sincere member and stout upholder of the established Church. He rightly conceived religion to be the great safeguard of a nation; and having a just abhorrence of the atrocities of the French revolution, which he considered to be the natural result of the nation's infidelity, he threw all his influence to the side of order and Christianity.

It was his wish that I should receive such an education as would qualify me for the bar; deeming that I had a competent share of ability, and that with industry and upright conduct a man is sure to make his way in that profession. Accordingly I was sent to a public school, and thence to the University of Oxford; at both of which places, though not pre-eminently distinguished, I obtained the credit of being a fair scholar. I read diligently the principal authors, both Latin and Greek. I studied divinity, logic, rhetoric, and ethics; and did not neglect the various opportunities afforded of attending lectures

in chemistry, botany, anatomy, geology, and other branches of information which are too commonly neglected by students at the university. My father's maxim was, that a lawyer ought to know the principles of every thing, and then, when occasion required, the details might easily be mastered. He related an anecdote of Mr. Pitt, who on a certain occasion shewed himself so intimately acquainted with the cotton-trade, that old Sir R. Peel declared he knew more about it than he (Sir Robert) did himself. It was, therefore, partly in obedience to the wishes of my father, and partly in accordance with my own inclinations, that I availed myself of the opportunity afforded at the university of making myself acquainted, as far as I was able, with the whole range of arts and sciences, literature and philosophy.

After taking my degree, I made a tour on the continent, and obtained such information as a hasty journey of six or eight months is calculated to give. Nor must this be looked on as inconsiderable. To a young mind gathering ideas, perhaps no time can be more profitably spent, for that purpose, than a few months devoted to travelling. The most cursory glance at foreign cities and places, a week at Paris, a fortnight in Switzerland, three weeks at Rome; nay, a mere hasty visit of a day to the various cities which have been the theatre of great events,—is sufficient to give an interest and reality to all we read and hear of such places in the course of after-life, which one who has not visited them can never experience.

And even the travelling with foreigners in a diligence, or bargaining with them in their shops, and the other casual opportunities of associating with them which present themselves in passing through their country, afford more insight into their character and feelings than one would at first imagine. Of course, he who wishes to have a thorough intimacy with foreigners must associate with them for months and even years. But then, in associating with foreigners there is a danger of impairing one's English feelings and habits. Few things can be more ill-advised than for parents to send their children to be educated in a foreign country, for any considerable portion of their youth. If they wish them to become Frenchmen or Germans in their feelings and habits, they cannot take a better course to secure their object ; but if they desire them to maintain the manliness and modesty of English character, they must educate their sons and daughters in their native land. There is also this peculiar disadvantage in a lengthened residence abroad in after-life ; namely, that a man living as a mere visitor or sojourner is apt to forget the ties which bind him to other classes of society. He ceases to feel his responsibility as a member of a national family. If a revolution occurs, he has only to order post-horses, and take himself off ; leaving the friends with whom he has been associated to settle their affairs amongst themselves as best they may. Thus he is tempted to luxuriate in selfish indulgence or elegant pursuits, regardless of the condition of the classes below him,

and of the requirements of the social position in which he moves ; and too often becomes selfish, frivolous, and useless. This has always appeared a great objection to a long residence in a foreign land. But a continental journey of six months, or a year, is of infinite advantage to a young Englishman, by filling his mind with a variety of ideas which will be corrected and matured as life advances ; and disabusing him of foolish prejudices, without impairing the genuineness of the English character. Having in view the profession for which I had been designed by my father, I directed my attention more to the social and political state of the countries which I visited, than to their religion. And all the knowledge on the latter head which I brought home with me was a strong, though undefined, impression of the impostures and mummeries of popery, which could not but strike the eye of the most unobservant traveller.

Such was the course of my education. Often have I regretted that I did not make a better and holier use of the precious days of youth ; and that, in my pursuit after knowledge and information, I suffered my mind and heart to be too much drawn aside from communion with heavenly things : still, I have great reason to thank God, and be grateful to a kind parent, for the many opportunities afforded me. For though I felt that I might have profited more in many ways, still I had gathered a good store of knowledge. I was trained up in many valuable

habits : I was well educated as a man and an Englishman, and well qualified to embark in the real business of life.

This is in truth the great value of an English university education. It keeps a young man back, "under tutors and governors," inured to obedience and persevering exertion, during those years when from inexperience he would be incapacitated for the active business of life; and then sends him forth elsewhere to acquire the requisite knowledge of the profession in which he decides to embark, with a mind imbued with much valuable and fundamental knowledge, and, if he has not abused his opportunities, with solid attainments and sound habits. Hence it is that in England we do not hear of revolution and riot, caused by Polytechnic Scholars. Boys of fifteen, if they rebel against authority, are well punished and disgraced; and so far from this temporary checking of youthful impulses and talents having any tendency to impair the character in after-life, it is certain that there is not in this world a more able, vigorous, and energetic character than that of an English gentleman.

Owing to circumstances which need not be detailed, the plan originally laid out for me by my father was not carried into execution; and with his consent I abandoned the law, and resolved to prepare myself for holy orders. Little, alas! did I know of the responsibilities which I was taking upon myself when I made this decision. But in truth none can fully estimate

the arduous and fearful nature of the ministerial office until they have engaged in it.

Though my views and motives were lamentably faulty, it must not be supposed that I presented myself as a candidate for ordination without a good deal of serious thought and preparation; or without a conscientious intention of performing my duties to the best of my ability. I carefully read the ordination-service, and weighed all the engagements which I was required to make. I had no hesitation in taking "the oath of the king's sovereignty:"—

"I, Bernard Leslie, do from my heart abhor, detest, and abjure, as impious and heretical, that damnable doctrine and position, that princes, excommunicated or deprived by the pope, or any authority of the see of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or any other whatsoever. And I do declare, that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate, hath, or ought to have, any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or civil, within the realm, so help me God."¹

I was quite ready to declare most conscientiously, that "I unfeignedly believed all the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; that I would diligently read the same unto the people assembled in the Church; that I would apply all my diligence to fashion my life according to the doctrine of Christ;

¹ See the "Form and Manner of making of Deacons," in the Prayer-book.

and that I would reverently obey the ordinary and other chief ministers of the Church, and them to whom the charge and government over me was committed, following with a glad mind all their godly admonitions."

The only questions which caused me to hesitate were the following:—"Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration? Do you think that you are truly called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the order of this realm, to the ministry of the Church?" I consulted commentators and writers on the subject, and talked with able and esteemed friends. The office of deacon, I argued, is a good work, and I feel a desire to undertake it, and a conscientious intention to do my duty in it; and such a desire, if it be, as I trust it is, genuine, is from the Holy Ghost, from whom come all good desires; and it is my wish to enter the ministry according to the order established in this realm, which, to the best of my knowledge and belief, is according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Deeply as I have often since regretted that my heart was not more alive to the vast importance of the responsibility which I was undertaking, and to the necessity of far more solemn preparation, by earnest prayer, and fasting and meditation, before entering upon so solemn a work, yet my conscience has never reproached me with any mental tampering with regard to the inward call. I gave the subject a

full and fair consideration ; I consulted with friends well able to advise ; and came to the conclusion, that a sincere desire to undertake the sacred office, and a conscientious determination to do my duty in it, were the inward motions of the Holy Ghost.

These deliberations were not postponed to the eve of my ordination, but were made at the time of my change of plan. And the short interval which elapsed between the time of my forming the resolution to present myself as a candidate, and my actual admission to the holy order of deacon, was spent in very diligent preparation for my examination. By the advice of an excellent friend, I applied myself principally to the study of the Holy Scriptures, and the offices and liturgy of the Church. The New Testament I read thoroughly in the original language ; the Old Testament, in the authorised translation. I used great diligence to compare and verify the articles and formularies of the Church by Scripture authority. This was certainly the best course which, with my limited time, I could have adopted. A competent knowledge of the sacred text, and a diligent comparison with Scripture of the whole Prayer-book, from one end to the other, was perhaps a good deal more knowledge than many possess when they begin their sacred function. Of the works of the fathers, or of the reformers, or of modern writers, I was profoundly ignorant. All I knew of controversial divinity was from the sermons of ——— and the late ———, and a few

other esteemed preachers, whom I had heard in the university pulpit; so that it may be conceived my views were sufficiently vague. One circumstance, in some respects advantageous, attended my deficiency in this respect, namely, that I entered upon the ministry the *partisan of no school*. I was what my father was,—a sincere member of the Church of England; which I was thoroughly persuaded was the most perfect Church ever established. Her formularies I believed faultless, with some few exceptions of very small importance. Our “religious” king I thought rather an unfortunate expression; the prayer for delivery from “*sudden death*,” I interpreted to mean a hope that we might not die unprepared. But such objections as these I looked upon as of small importance—mere spots on the sun’s disk. Of the general excellence of the Established Church, and all things appertaining to her,—of the corruption of Rome, and the unreasonableness of dissent, I entertained not the slightest doubt; nor have subsequent years, though greatly enlarging my views and modifying my sentiments, at all weakened my impression of the excellence of the Anglican Church. What was then a traditionary feeling has now become, upon mature investigation, a firm and rational belief.

Though we have reason to bless and praise God for having placed our lot in a Church the doctrines and practices of which become the more approved to our reason and love the more we are acquainted

with them, and are imbued with their excellence, yet surely it must be admitted that more opportunities should be afforded to candidates for ordination to acquire a thorough knowledge of her principles. For it is lamentable and notorious, that many attached members of the Church regard her not as she ought to be, and in her acknowledged formularies really is, but as they now see her. They do not take her character from her actual documents and offices, but from the corrupt practices which have grown up within the last century. And even one who, like myself, sets himself in earnest to study her principles, is led to think the manifold deviations from them to be necessary concessions to the spirit of the times. The only way of correcting these errors seems to be, the foundation of theological seminaries, where young clergy may be trained up in the knowledge and exact practice of the Church as she is in truth, and not merely ostensibly. It will perhaps be answered that, with many theological students, the time required for this lengthened course of study could not be afforded. These are things, however, which belong to the heads of the Church to arrange according to their wisdom.



Wild Fancy, peace! thou must not me beguile
 With thy false smile;
I know thy flatteries and thy cheating ways.
 Be silent, Praise!
Blind guide with siren voice, and blinding all
 That hear thy call.

KEBLE.



CHAPTER II.

The First Curacy.

THE first scene of my labours was the pleasant country village of Somerton. The rector had been obliged, from ill health, to give up his duties, and remove to the south of England. The chief inducement with me to accept, the curacy of Somerton was the comparative easiness of the duties. Not that I intended to shrink from labour, or considered my profession as one which authorised indolence ; but I really thought, and do so still, that a young, inexperienced curate does best to undertake, in the first instance, such duties as may most easily be performed. For a mere beginner to thrust himself forward in a conspicuous place, or plunge into the duties of a populous town, unless it be under the guidance of an experienced incumbent, is often productive of much evil both to himself and his parishioners. I do not think, therefore, that I was blameable in selecting a country village for the commencement of my labours. Perhaps one inducement which had more influence than I am willing to allow, was

the romantic beauty of the little parsonage, which, with its trelliced walls and pretty garden, formed a beautiful appendage to the picturesque village church. To take such things into the account in the choice of a situation, may indicate an absence of due feeling of the thorough sacrifice of self which a minister of the Cross ought to resolve on ; yet my readers will, I trust, not judge very harshly of a young man for being captivated by a picturesque village church and a romantic parsonage.

By the liberality of my father, I was enabled to establish myself very comfortably at my new abode. My books were all deposited in due order in the book-cases which lined the study-walls. A respectable elderly woman took charge of the interior of my domicile ; and her husband was engaged to keep the garden in order, and take care of my horse.

It was perhaps fortunate for me, in some respects, that the curacy of Somerton was not a place of great difficulty, but one where my deficiencies would be overlooked, and my blunders not much heeded. To some persons such a situation might have been very prejudicial, by leading them into idle habits ; but it had not this effect with me. My education had given me a habit of industry and perseverance, and though, from the confessions contained in the foregoing chapter, it will be seen that I did not enter upon my labours with that sort of ardent zeal which is so becoming a minister of the Gospel, yet I was not without a conscientious desire

of doing my duty, and imparting all the good I was able to my parishioners. I was also ambitious, though not, I trust, in a sinful, but in an honest sense. I hoped that my exertion in the comparatively small sphere of action in which I was engaged might qualify me for more conspicuous and more important posts. My rector, though absent, continued to take a lively interest in the welfare of his parish, and kept up a constant correspondence with myself as well as other residents. He was very anxious that every thing should be kept up and continued in the precise order in which he left it; so that I was precluded from entering upon innovations which, to many ardent and inexperienced ministers, have proved sad stumbling-blocks. Nor, in truth, was I, either by temperament or conviction, disposed to make innovations, had I been able to do so. My mind was not set that way. I had been brought up in reverence for age and authority; I thought the Church of England the best establishment in the world—the village of Somerton the flower of English villages; and my principal desire was to acquit myself rightly in the situation in which I was placed. My chief fault was, that I had too low an estimate of the responsibilities and duties of my office.

One plan which, from former studious habits, and conviction of its propriety, I at once adopted, and persevered in, was to write my own sermons. This I did with considerable care; and from the research necessary to investigate the different sub-

jects on which I wrote, I began to make some advance in theological knowledge. My father had furnished my library with what he supposed a valuable collection of the standard English divines, which I consulted with most indiscriminating selection, and without the slightest knowledge of the difference of their views, though of course their discrepancies would sometimes strike me. Tillotson and Taylor, Hooker and Hall, Blair and Beveridge, Cooper and Chalmers,—all were referred to, if they happened to treat on the subject which I was investigating; and all were considered by me as standard authorities. Mant, Scott, and Henry, were all appealed to, as commentators of equal value. And when, as it often happened, in comparing these authorities together, I discovered important differences in their views, I just took the interpretation which seemed to me the best. So that while I fancied I was appealing to authority, it was, after all, my own private judgment which decided. Often as I have smiled and wondered, upon taking up one of my old sermons, and observing the crude and contradictory views which it contained; yet it must not be supposed that they were without effect—I trust I may say a good effect—when they were delivered. Being my own genuine production, written with care, and preached with animation, they were listened to attentively by my congregation, which began very perceptibly to increase. I had also the temptation of having my sermons praised. Even the squire of the parish did

me the honour to express himself as well pleased with my performances. I thought him a man of excellent judgment, and of more discrimination than I had before given him credit for.

Another cause of the increase of my congregation was my diligence in visiting my parishioners at their houses, both during sickness and health. I was quite free from pride and reserve, and thought it my duty to make myself popular amongst them. I dined with the squire as often as he asked me, made myself agreeable to his wife and daughters, drank tea with the farmers, chatted with the cottagers; and was always ready to give relief to those in distress, without very strict inquiry.

It must not be supposed that in this familiar intercourse I at all lowered my dignity either as a gentleman or clergyman. An undue familiarity defeats its object, and makes a man despised rather than loved or respected. But in truth I was of a cheerful, buoyant disposition; I wished well to every one, and took for granted that they were disposed in the same way to me.

It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that I became popular; that my church was well attended, my preaching admired; that the labourers took off their hats respectfully, and their wives and daughters dropt a willing curtesy, as I passed; the children came up confidently, instead of running away when they saw the parson; the farmers spoke with hearty good will; and I was on the best possible terms

with the squire and his family. Nor, under these circumstances, will my readers be surprised that I was impressed with the idea that I was a very excellent young clergyman, and one who did credit to his profession.

All this went on for several months; and it was only through the great mercy of God that I was saved from continuing in gross delusion. I trust He saw that my heart—rather, that my intentions, were right, though my knowledge was most defective; and He gradually opened my eyes to the deceptive nature of the scene in which I was living. One of the first annoyances which befel me was to observe the stubborn sinfulness of many of my poor parishioners, and the apathy with which they received my exhortations to attend divine service. Many of them too, especially those who neglected the worship of God, were addicted to drunkenness, and other vices; while their neglect of church was a manifest proof that they were living without God in the world. My admonitions were ineffectual to reclaim them; and yet, in case of accident or sickness, these men commonly sent for me, and appeared to listen to my advice with attention; and when I urged upon them repentance and faith in Christ, and proclaimed that such was their only hope of forgiveness, they would say, that they believed in their Saviour, and repented of their sins, and trusted that God, for the sake of His Son, would forgive them. And so some went to the grave; others recovered, and, I am sorry to say,

returned, in many instances, to their wallowing in the mire. The frequent occurrence of such cases as these distressed me more than I can describe. The way in which notorious sinners comforted themselves in the hour of death was to me fearfully appalling. Had they shewn distress and anguish when reminded of the sinfulness of their lives, it would have been more hopeful; but when they persisted in shutting their eyes to their danger, and received the promises of the Gospel as belonging to them of right, I shuddered to think what must be their fate if they deceived themselves. They were souls placed under my keeping—souls for whom I had to give account. I felt a sad foreboding, that in the case of many, their assumed faith, or even fancied repentance, was hollow and insincere. And the more I thought, and read the word of God or the offices of the Church, so much the more I felt convinced that *the only sure preparation for a death of hope was a holy and religious life*. Mere protestation of repentance and faith in Christ on a deathbed, though it is possible they may sometimes be sincere, yet I fear are generally delusive, at any rate most unsatisfactory.

But there was another very serious fact, which perplexed and annoyed me, if possible, even more than the former,—that was, the discovery of several cases of hypocrisy amongst those whom I had considered the best of my parishioners. Some of my most regular church-goers were detected in dishonest practices. My schoolmistress, who appeared the

pattern of every thing which was good, sadly misbehaved herself. I thank God that there were also many, who always, as long as I continued at Somerton, conducted themselves as faithful servants of Christ. But the discovery of so many serious blots, where I had believed all to be good and fair, greatly disheartened and perplexed me.

One sign of the small influence which I could exert in removing great and radical evils, appeared in the difficulty of getting my parishioners, even those who professed themselves attached to me, to correct the smallest deviation from propriety to which they had been accustomed. They were continually sending to me to baptise their children, though in perfect health, at home, instead of bringing them to church; and I had either to break the positive rule of the Church, or to appear ill-natured by refusing. The greatest difficulty was found in getting any of the congregation to join in the responses or psalms, or to frequent the holy communion. It occurred to me, that if, in mere external duties, my exhortations and influence had so little effect, there was a fearful probability that in weightier matters, such as the rooting out sinful habits, and turning their hearts to God, a still greater deficiency would be found.

The reader will be aware that I had by this time made the discovery, which every earnest clergyman will make sooner or later, that "all is not gold that glitters!" My picturesque parsonage and venerable church, the cheerful smiles and even hearty good-

will of my parishioners, though in themselves things for which I might well be thankful, yet concealed beneath them many things which it was fearful to think on, and perplexing to know how to deal with.

The manner in which I became gradually acquainted with the real state of my parishioners will be best illustrated by an incident which shall be related in the next chapter.



Before my eyes a wanderer stood ;
Her face from summer's noon-day heat
No bonnet shaded, nor the hood
Of the blue cloak, which to her feet
Depended with a graceful flow.

• • • • •
She begg'd an alms ; no scruple check'd
The current of her ready plea—
Words that could challenge no respect
But from a blind credulity ;
And yet a boon I gave her —————

WORDSWORTH.



CHAPTER III.

Disappointment. The Dead Horse.

ONE day, as I was occupied in my study, Rachel (my servant) announced that one of my parishioners wished to speak with me. I desired at once that the person should be admitted. It was a young woman of about thirty, of prepossessing appearance, though poor in her attire. She carried a baby in her arms, and her eyes were filled with tears.

"Sit down, good woman, and let me know what is your business with me. Rachel tells me you are one of my parishioners, but I do not remember to have seen you at church."

"I live with my husband at Woodend, two miles from the church; so, sir, as we are but a mile from Chorley church, we go there, sir, when we are able."

The distances did not appear to me quite correct; however, I was glad to hear that she and her family did not neglect divine worship.

"And pray, what is your husband's name and occupation?"

“ Jacob Junks, sir. He keeps a cart and horse, and carries things from Ashford. But, O sir,”—and here she burst into a flood of tears,—“ O sir, our poor horse died last night, and I am afraid we shall be ruined.”

This did seem indeed a very great misfortune ; and I hastened to assuage the poor woman's grief by assuring her that I would render what little assistance I was able ; and taking out my purse, I bestowed half a sovereign on her.

Mrs. Junks rose from her seat, and curtsied very modestly, with a profusion of thanks and benedictions, but did not seem prepared to leave the room. “ If I might make bold,” she said at last, “ to ask another favour”—

“ What is it, good woman—what is it ?”

“ Why, sir, if you would just please to put down the particulars of the case on a piece of paper, and set your name to it, that I may take it to some of the gentlefolks ; and maybe I shall get a few shillings more, which may help to buy us another horse.”

Here it occurred to me, that though I had given her relief myself without any strict inquiry, it would not be right for me to certify the fact of the death of the horse without some more sure evidence than the mere word of Sally Junks.

“ You said the horse died last night ; pray, where does it lie ?”

“ O sir,” said Sally, “ it is in the green lane just by our cottage.”

“ Very well ; I will walk that way in the afternoon, and see it.”

Accordingly, after my in-door labours were over, and my next Sunday's sermon finished quite to my satisfaction,—a labour which, though I did not grudge it, yet when completed always brought a considerable relief and gratification to the mind,—being thus released from care, I took my hat and set off for Woodend. It was a delightful day in spring. The trees and hedges were just in full foliage, the air was redolent with the perfume of honeysuckles and cowslips, every copse re-echoed with the song of birds, and the sleek cattle were luxuriating in the fresh pastures. For a while I kept the footpath by the side of a pleasant stream ; then climbed the brow of a gentle eminence, which commanded a delightful view of the surrounding country. My spirits were in harmony with the beauty of the day and scene ; and I felt very grateful to God for having ordained that I should serve Him amidst scenes so lovely. It was about three months after my arrival at Somerton, while all was bright and sunny, and no clouds had arisen to dim my path.

After a short hour's walk I arrived at Woodend, where I found Sally Junks, with her baby and two or three other children.

“ Well, I am come to see the horse, Mrs. Junks ; where is he ?”

“ I will go with you, sir, to the end of the lane.”

“ That's a fierce dog of yours,” I said, pointing

to a most ferocious-looking bull-dog, which was chained to an old barrel.

"We keep him for safety," said Sally; "in this out-o'-the-way place the house might be robbed, sir."

I looked round the house, and thought that if thieves were to come, they would find no great booty. However, without further remarks, I followed my conductress to the spot where the dead horse lay.

"There he is, sir," said she; "and a faithful servant he has been; but he will never do us another day's work,"—and here she raised her apron to her eyes.

The striking figure of the young mother with her ragged children, and the carcass of the dead horse, all formed a very picturesque group, and put me in mind of Sterne's story of the dead ass. So, without more ado, I took from my pocket the paper which I had already drawn up and signed, stating the particulars of the case, and calling on the benevolent to bestow their aid; and then proceeded homeward, with the notion that I had not only been charitable but prudent.

However, my dream was soon dispelled. The next Sunday one of the churchwardens walked part of the way with me from church.

"I am sorry to hear, sir, that you have put your name to a petition for Jacob Junks."

"Why should you be sorry, Mr. Tibbs? perhaps you have not heard of his misfortune. He has lost

a valuable horse (here Mr. Tibbs could not help laughing) — valuable at least to him," I continued, "as he got his livelihood by it."

"Why, sir, he is the greatest rogue and vagabond in the county," said the churchwarden.

"Rogue or not rogue, I know not; but I know his horse is dead; for I saw it with my own eyes, before I signed the paper."

"I know you did, sir: there is no doubt that the horse was dead. However, the long and short of it is this; Junks has only had the horse in his possession two days, and it was not worth half a sovereign when he got it. He had a tolerable beast, which was worth four or five pounds, or it may be six; but he took a fancy to an ugly bull-dog, belonging to Jim Screw, and swapped his own horse for that and an old worn-out creature belonging to Jim, which had not a leg to stand on. And I verily believe, at the time he made the bargain, he intended to do what he has done. Why, sir, he has been all round the country with your petition—I mean that which you signed, sir; and he has got more than enough to buy him three horses; and I do believe he has not gone to bed sober ever since he got this paper."

The information given me by the churchwarden proved most true. But the adventure of Jacob Junks and his dead horse did not end here; for only a day or two afterwards I received a second visit from his wife, informing me that he had been brought home that morning with his skull fractured, having met

with an accident in some drunken quarrel, and that there was little hope of his recovery. I went immediately to visit him, and found him in a most pitiable plight, lying on a wretched pallet, with his head bandaged up, his face livid with bruises, his eyes scarcely visible. He was well aware of his danger, and spoke as a dying man. I of course availed myself of the opportunity to appeal to him in strong terms on the sinfulness of his life—the necessity of repentance and turning to God with all his heart; and when, after some visits, he was, as I trusted, humbled and contrite, I spoke of God's love for perishing sinners, and the hope that yet remained even to the most reprobate.

To my surprise, though he listened attentively, he seemed but little impressed with his danger. He acknowledged his sinfulness without reserve; but said he believed in Christ, and trusted that God would be merciful to him for His sake. He freely forgave all who had injured him, and hoped that God would forgive him. His wife too, standing by his bedside, bore testimony that he had been a good husband, and never wished any one harm, and declared that he had been no one's enemy but his own. Nor could all my endeavours change the current of his thoughts. He freely confessed and bewailed his sins, and declared that he sought for forgiveness only for the merits of Christ. Had he died, as every one expected, I might have been deceived by the hope that he was a true penitent. But, contrary to all

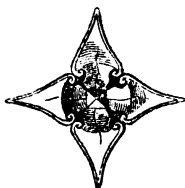
expectation, he recovered ; and as his strength grew, I was distressed to see that all his protestations of penitence were disregarded. His old habits revived ; and though, at my urgent desire, he attended at church to offer up public thanksgivings for his recovery, yet I am sorry to say that was the only time I saw him within its walls.

Though the case of poor Junks was more striking than others, yet it is too certain that it was but an instance of what occurs fearfully often. Many times have I attended the bed of the dying sinner—not, perhaps, the openly wicked, but the worldly and frivolous, who have not sought the Lord in their strength and health—and have heard their confessions of sin—their regrets at their former conduct—their trust that for their Saviour's merits their sins may be forgiven ; and if they have been restored to health, they have too often returned to their old sins and indulgences ; or if they have died, have passed into eternity—leaving on my mind the fearful impression that a death-bed repentance, without a life of holiness, is but a broken reed on which to rest.

Nor must it be supposed that such scenes are confined to the lowest rank of life, where open profligacy and ungodliness are seen in their naked deformity. The well-doing amongst the middle and upper classes are, to a melancholy degree, liable to the same delusions ; namely, of passing a life without communion with God,—not openly profligate, perhaps, but utterly void of all true religious feeling,

—and yet supposing, that because they profess their faith in Christ, all their sins will be done away, and His righteousness imputed to them ; fancying, in short, like Balaam, that they can “die the death of the righteous,” without living a righteous life.

As I meditated in the solitude of my study, these thoughts on the state of those committed to me disheartened and perplexed me. My sleep was broken at night—my walks through the sunny fields became less joyous ; when I met a parishioner of whom I knew something ill, I could not accost him with the same cordial welcome as when I thought him honest and sincere. At last the truth flashed on me, that there was something radically defective in my management of the parish ; and I resolved to seek counsel of one whom I supposed able to assist me.



I am Sir Oracle :
And when I ope my lips let no dog bark.
SHAKSPEARE : *Merchant of Venice.*



CHAPTER IV.

The friendly Adviser.

ACCORDINGLY, the next morning, after a restless night and a hasty breakfast, I mounted my horse at as early an hour as I could reasonably devote to a morning call, and rode over to the town of Market Ashford, which was about six miles distant, in order to call on the Rev. Watts Flavel, who was the Vicar.

Mr. Flavel was a man who had a considerable reputation for talent, piety, and activity; he was a frequent speaker at public meetings; he preached extempore, and was in great request amongst the neighbouring parishes when charity-sermons were wanted; and the success of his ministry in his own parish was highly commended.

I had met Mr. Flavel on several occasions, and his appearance and conversation had impressed me with an opinion of his ability: he was courteous and patronising, but a little pompous withal—he was accustomed to utter his sentiments very con-

fidently ; and I observed that few persons ventured to controvert them. Besides, he was the rural dean of the district. On all accounts, therefore, he appeared to me a very proper person to consult under my difficulties.

Mr. Flavel was at home, but engaged, as his servant informed me, with receiving the report of his district-visitors. If, however, I could find it convenient to wait for ten minutes or a quarter of an hour, he would be happy to see me. At the end of this time, the active vicar entered the room with a bundle of tracts in his hand, apologised for keeping me waiting, shook me very kindly by the hand, and then rushed out again, to give some further directions, which in his haste he had forgotten. After about ten minutes more he returned, and said he was much at my service for half an hour (taking out his watch), at the end of which time he was engaged to attend a committee-meeting of the Missionary Society.

Seeing the reverend gentleman so busily employed, I thought it but civil to offer to call on some other day, which he might please to fix, when I should find him more at leisure.

“Leisure !” said he, smiling ; “that is a luxury to which I have bid farewell these many years.”

I was not aware at the time, though I afterwards discovered, that business, not leisure, was the element in which Mr. Flavel luxuriated. Nothing so much suited his taste as the bustle in which he was

then placed. And, in fact, so far from my visit being an annoyance to him, he was always delighted when an opportunity was afforded him of interesting himself in other parishes as well as his own. One thing in which Mr. Flavel particularly prided himself, was the facility with which he could turn his mind from one important object to another. The district-visitors, with all their paraphernalia of tracts and reports, were banished as soon as the door closed on them, and Mr. Flavel's whole attention was devoted to my service.

Anxious to secure as much of his valuable advice as the limited time of half an hour admitted, I at once entered upon the most serious portion of my difficulties—the sad state of my parish, the apathy of some, the hypocrisy of others, and the impossibility which I found of successfully opposing it.

“ Ah, my young friend,” said he, “ I see you are beginning practically to discern the corruption of human nature. You have found out that ‘ old Adam is too strong for young Melancthon.’ ”

“ I have indeed, sir; and if you can furnish me with some practical remedy, I shall be greatly obliged.”

“ What remedy can be found surer than that contained in the word of God—Jesus the Friend and Saviour of perishing sinners?”

“ That is indeed a blessed doctrine, the basis of all our hopes. But the difficulty with me is, *how to apply it efficaciously to the souls of those committed*

to me. Here is poor human nature: there is the balm and medicine. How is one to be applied to the other?"

"How but by faith? It is by faith that we have access to God, and obtain all the benefits of redemption."

"True, but how is faith to be implanted and maintained?"

"Surely by preaching Christ crucified. The atonement made by Christ on the cross is the grand remedy for all evil; and how shall sinners obtain an interest in that atonement without faith? and how shall they believe without a preacher? This is the burden which is laid upon us, as it was upon the apostles of old; and woe be unto us if we preach not the Gospel."

"Yes, sir; but then the apostles preached faith and baptism to unbelievers. When men have confessed their faith, then, I presume, some other mode of preaching is desirable."

"Depend upon it, sir," said my adviser, "that the more you keep to this great fundamental doctrine, the more success you will have: 'only believe, and thou shalt be saved,' this is the simple Christian scheme, so exactly suited to our condition as lost and perishing sinners, who can do nothing for ourselves to help ourselves: 'only believe, and thou shalt be saved.' The whole Gospel is contained in this one text."

“Only believe, and thou shalt be saved?” thought I to myself; I do not remember to have heard of such a text. Our Church says, indeed, that we are *justified* by faith only: but I do not remember to have heard that we are *saved* by faith only; though it is quite certain that we cannot be saved *without* faith. However, this was the very thing that puzzled me. My congregation, who assemble every Sunday, have no doubt that they believe in Christ; and yet, alas! how many of them dishonour Christ in their lives! The most wretched sinner on his death-bed will profess his belief in Christ; yet how seldom can the utmost charity indulge more than the faintest hope of his salvation!

“The necessity of faith in Christ,” I said, after a short pause, “is unquestionably the primary doctrine of the Christian religion. But then, surely there is much to come after that—holiness of life, for instance?”

“Oh, undoubtedly; that will come of course.”

“But my grand difficulty, sir, is, *that it does not come of course.*”

“That only proves that faith is not genuine,” answered Mr. Flavel, with great readiness.

I was not at all satisfied with this explanation. It was most true that want of holiness proved absence or weakness of faith; but what I wanted was, to make sure that I had used all the means in my power whereby those committed to me might obtain a living

faith. I had preached and preached, and they had listened—still their lives were not holy. Had I done all? What else could I do? or what could they do? Were they to wait till faith came?

At last I proceeded: "It has occurred to me, sir, that much good might be done by a more diligent resort to the other ordinances of the Church, as well as preaching."

"I fear you will find ordinances but a feeble staff," said Mr. Flavel.

This struck me as rather inconsistent in one who had just been saying so much in favour of the ordinance of preaching: however, I continued—"It seems to be implied in the first rubric of the Prayer-book that there shall be daily prayers in all parish churches. And I have thought, sir, that as we know from Scripture the great effect of prayer, nothing would be more likely to obtain God's blessing on a parish, and improve the hearts of the people, than to open the church every day for divine service."

Mr. Flavel appeared highly diverted at this suggestion; and said, laughing—

"That is rather a novel idea of yours, I must confess; but, pray, have you considered how you shall get the congregation together, especially if there are *only* prayers—for I suppose you do not intend to treat them with a sermon every day?"

I answered, that I had often seen in foreign churches a good many people engaged in prayer at

break of day ; and that even in some of our cathedrals there was a fair congregation. It had occurred to me, that it was the intention of our reformers that there should be daily prayers in all churches as well as the cathedrals. The cathedrals were intended, in some measure, as patterns to the rest of the diocese ; and though the corrupt faith of the Church of Rome might greatly mar the value of their supplication, yet that the pure prayers of our own Church daily offered up could not fail of obtaining God's blessing.

Mr. Flavel evidently continued greatly amused at the warmth with which I defended my novel idea.

" My good young friend," he replied, with a patronising air, " I admire your zeal, and only regret to see (you will pardon me for saying it) that you are so little conversant with the wants and habits of the times"—(this made me think I had been talking very foolishly ; and I shrank before his superior knowledge and experience) ; but he added, " As you have done me the honour to seek my advice, and have evidently a zeal for the truth, I will tell you what I would recommend.—Have you got a good-sized school-room in your parish ?"

" Very fair."

" Well, you cannot do better than have a prayer-meeting there on the Thursday evenings."

" But," I replied, " it is within twenty yards of the church."

" Never mind that : people will come to the

school who would not go to church. Besides, if you open your church, you must have the whole service, from 'Dearly beloved' to the end. Whereas, if you have it in the school, an extemporary prayer of your own will be sufficient before the lecture."

I ventured to urge that this plan seemed a little like that adopted by the dissenters; but he overruled my objection by observing, that if the dissenters had hit upon the taste of the people, we could not do better than take a leaf or two out of their book—*fas est et ab hoste doceri*.

Here Mr. Flavel looked at his watch; and understanding it as a hint that the half-hour had expired, I took my leave, thanking him very sincerely for his advice; and on the strength of it, instead of opening the church for daily service, as I had intended, I gave notice for a Thursday lecture in the school-room; and, instead of ranging, as I had been used to do, through the whole field of Scripture in search of subjects for my discourses, I confined myself chiefly to the doctrine of the atonement, justification by faith, and one or two others which are commonly designated as evangelical.

The consequence of these measures was, that having before been disconnected with any party in the Church, I now acquired the character of being an evangelical preacher. My church had been very well filled before, as churches generally will be when the clergyman takes pains to do his duty, and has no

natural deficiency ; the only difference was, that now a few dissenters came occasionally to the evening service. This pleased me ; and I thought I had made converts. It did not occur to me, that it was very possible I might have been going over to them, instead of them coming to me.

It rather took me by surprise, I confess, when one day, after I had begun my course of evangelical proceedings, a deputation of three of the leading dissenters in the neighbourhood waited on me, with a request that I would be a subscriber to their new school. Their object, they said, was the same as mine — to bring sinners to Christ ; their doctrine was the same : why should we not, then, mutually assist each other ? I felt that I was acting rather inconsistently in refusing their request.

There was a large pew in Somerton church, which was never occupied, unless the rest were all full, when the sexton ventured to put those who could not find places into it. This pew belonged to one of the principal farmers, a dissenter, who lived at a distant part of the parish. Soon after I began my evangelical preaching, I was gratified by seeing this gentleman enter his pew. His visit was repeated several Sundays ; and I had the satisfaction of hoping that I had gained a convert to the Church. However, it happened that one week in preparing my sermon, I found my text applicable to the subject of infant baptism, and accordingly I introduced a few

remarks on the subject, thinking it might confirm my Baptist friend in his better views. On walking into the church, I had been glad to observe Mr. C—— driving up in his jaunting-car with rather a larger party than usual; and we exchanged very cordial salutations in passing. However, that was the last time I ever had the pleasure of seeing him or his friends in Somerton church. He did not come there, he said, to be preached at.

If clergymen preach dissenters' doctrine, dissenters will come to church when it suits their convenience. But once touch on their peculiar errors, and you see them no more. They come to judge, not to be judged.

The same causes which led to the desertion of my church by this gentleman drove away other of my dissenting admirers; and I was soon left to my old congregation: and even they were not quite so regular and attentive as they had been. They used to hear something worth hearing, they said, every Sunday; but now it was the same story over and over again. They did not know what was come to me.

Not very long after my visit to Market Ashford, I received the following letter from my rector:—

“DEAR MR. LESLIE,

“When the engagement was entered into between us, by which you were appointed to the curacy of Somer-

ton, I thought it had been distinctly understood, that no innovations were to be introduced into the parish without my express concurrence. I have often congratulated myself in having so zealous and excellent a substitute during my illness, and hoped that all things would have gone on satisfactorily ; but I have heard with regret that you have recently established a week-day lecture at the school-room, of which I cannot approve ; and therefore am obliged to request that it may be forthwith discontinued.

“ I remain, dear Sir,

“ Your faithful servant,

“ JOHN ALWORTHY.”

On the receipt of this letter I was a little indignant ; but had the prudence not to send any answer that day. On the morrow, being cooler, I wrote a temperate letter, stating my objects, and motives of my conduct ; and in reply received an equally temperate answer. Mr. Alworthy felt quite sure that I could have had no other motive than the good of the parish. It was to the means which I had taken that he objected, as inefficient for that purpose. If it had been a distant hamlet, where there were old people too infirm to go to church, he should not have objected to my expounding to them the Scripture in an unconsecrated building, supposing it impracticable to have one consecrated ; but to open the school for divine service when the church was close by, appeared to him an unnecessary deviation from the practice, and, as he believed, from the positive directions, of

the Church ; and he considered it further objectionable, as accustoming church-people to the habits and methods of dissenters.

The result was, that the week-day lecture was discontinued.



See yonder preacher to his people pass,
Borne up and swell'd by tabernacle gas :
Much he discourses, and of various points,
All unconnected, void of limbs and joints ;
He rails, persuades, explains, and moves the will,
By fierce bold words and strong mechanic skill.
CRABBE.



CHAPTER V.

The tempting Offer.

THE friendship which I had commenced with Mr. Flavel was not suffered by that zealous gentleman to die away. On the contrary, I was much flattered by the very evident anxiety which he shewed to cultivate the confidential communication which had begun between us. When I told him of Mr. Alworthy's objection to the week-day lectures, he made very few remarks ; merely shrugged his shoulders, and observed that we must make allowance for people's prejudices. Soon after, he did me the honour to come over and see my school ; and though I was not able to avail myself of his advice in making any decided alteration in opposition to the wishes of my rector, and the understanding which subsisted between us, yet, in many minor particulars, which did not seem to come under the head of innovations, several improvements were introduced at the suggestion of Mr. Flavel. For instance, though I did not feel myself justified in discontinuing the use of any of the books which had been employed in the

school, and substituting others, yet there could be no harm, as Mr. Flavel said, in adding one or two. In particular, he recommended some very nice-looking books of the Religious Tract Society, as rewards to the children; and was even so kind as to present me with a dozen, very neat and pretty, at a halfpenny each.

“They get their things up remarkably well, and cheaply too,” said he. “You will perhaps like to have their address for future occasions. It may save you some expense.” Of course I took the address, and thanked Mr. Flavel for his kindness: never once reflecting, that if the contents of the volumes were not sound and scriptural, they were not worth even the halfpenny which they cost.

Our intimacy daily increasing, Mr. Flavel most condescendingly ventured (as he said) to request that I would preach a charity-sermon at his church, on the occasion of the Queen’s Letter for the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; an office which I undertook with pleasure, and, I believe, gave satisfaction both to Mr. Flavel and his congregation.

There was one individual, at any rate, who was satisfied with my performance. This was the Rev. Theodosius O’Brien, Mr. Flavel’s curate. At the particular request of this gentleman, I called on him at his lodgings before setting off homewards.

“My dear sir,” said he, grasping my hand with cordiality, “allow me again to express how much

I have felt gratified by your admirable discourse. I do not know any one whom I should be more pleased to see occupying my place in the pulpit."

Mr. O'Brien, it should be observed, was reckoned a crack preacher at Market Ashford, and greatly admired, especially by the unmarried ladies. His sermons furnished an important subject of conversation in a country town, where topics were scarce. And though there was an anti-O'Brien party amongst some of the more staid inhabitants, yet, on the whole, he was looked on as decidedly a very popular man. The condescending expression of his approval, therefore, was very satisfactory. *Laudari a laudato viro* is certainly a feather in one's cap; and of course I could only express my gratification.

"You will certainly make a capital preacher in time," said my new friend. "But allow me to add," he continued, "that I do not quite like your doctrine."

"How so?" said I, somewhat disappointed, and not quite recognising his authority to blame, although I had no objection to his praise.

"I'll tell you my notion of the true sort of doctrine. I make it a rule that three parts, at least, of every sermon which I preach shall be on Christ crucified."

"Nay," said I, interrupting him, "St. Paul determined to 'know *nothing* save Christ, and Him crucified.' I trust that my sermons are not only *three parts*, but *entirely* devoted to that all-pervading

doctrine. And surely we cannot do better than follow the example of St. Paul himself, and may safely preach on all the topics which he introduces ; all of which, he declares, are connected with that which is the centre of his system."

" You do not understand me, sir," said Mr. O'Brien, with the greatest coolness, and all the air of superiority which his celebrity at Market Ashford warranted. " The whole Christian scheme lies in a nutshell. You should stick to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans. If you did not know a word of Scripture besides, that would be enough. I have it all at my finger-ends. First, you know, the corruption of man, Jew and Gentile, all under sin ; none righteous, no not one ; all our righteousness filthy rags ; then salvation, full and free, offered to the worst of sinners, according to the predetermined counsel of God. This is the plan, sir ; stick to this, and you are sure to be right. Down with the sinner, and exalt the Saviour. Besides, sir, I find it very useful, in preaching extempore (which, I observe, sir, you do not do), to have something always to come back to. Sometimes, indeed, I take a ride on the black horse in the Revelations. I did so a Sunday or two ago ; and you should have seen how the people pricked up their ears !"

" Better to prick their hearts," thought I.

" Have you ever read Dwight?" said my Irish friend, rather abruptly, after a short pause.

I answered in the negative.

“What! not read Dwight? If you don’t know Dwight, you know nothing. (I felt much flattered by this remark.) Dwight’s system of theology contains all that is worth knowing—every subject is treated as it should be. A man who knows Dwight’s theology knows enough for a bishop.”

Dwight, it should be observed, was a very good man in some respects, but an American Dissenter.

Mr. O’Brien then took down one of five well-thumbed volumes, which constituted nearly the whole of his library, and begged that I would take it with me to read. “I cannot let you have the others until you have done with that, as I am wanting them every day.”

I promised to read the volume as soon as I could make opportunity.

“And do you find,” I asked, thinking that my new friend might assist me in my difficulties—“do you find that the people who attend your preachings—the people of Market Ashford, I mean—lead godly lives, and avoid that tittle-tattle and jealousy for which country towns so generally have the credit?”

“I am sorry to say (but you must not tell them who said it) that there is not a more gossiping, tale-bearing, quarrelsome set in England than the people of this town. There is scarcely one of those who praise me most to my face in whom I can place the slightest confidence. I can assure you, sir, I am heartily sick, and wish I was well rid of them.”

It did not seem to occur to Mr. O'Brien that the condition of his parish in these respects was any test of the benefit of his preaching. His only notion of the use of preaching was to obtain the admiration of a large congregation; and I afterwards heard that his popularity had been somewhat on the decline.

"I will tell you what," said he, looking very mysterious; "I have got a little scheme for you and me. What do you say," he continued, drawing his chair nearer, and speaking in a lower tone, as if he was afraid some one should hear—"what do you say to trying your fortune in London?"

"In what way?" I inquired.

"Why, suppose you and I were to go and take a chapel between us?"

This he said with the greatest earnestness. I answered, that I had not any intention at that time of leaving my present situation.

"Why, how much do you get?" asked Mr. O'Brien.

I stated that I had a good house and fifty pounds a year.

"Och, a poor fifty pounds a year!" said he, with a sneer; "why, I'd warrant that if you would go with me, we'd make 600*l.* a piece the first year. I'll tell you what, sir; we'd fill all the pews in a fortnight, and bring the people from all parts of London."

"I should be sorry to draw people away from

their own parishes, and interfere with the congregations of other clergymen."

"Other clergymen! I'll tell you what, sir; we'd preach them all out of their pulpits in no time."

As I had no ambition to preach my brother-clergy out of their pulpits, I declined accepting Mr. O'Brien's flattering proposal. Yet it certainly had a little effect on my mind; it made me rather vain of my preaching, and ambitious schemes began to float in my head.

Mr. Theodosius O'Brien was quite in earnest about his scheme; for, not many months afterwards, he packed up his Dwight, and set off for the metropolis, with a view to exercise his functions as a popular preacher—for which occupation there is no denying that he had a good deal of talent, being fluent and confident, his voice good, and his person handsome; though it must be confessed he was very scantily furnished with the doctrines of the English Church.



Since, Lord, to Thee
A narrow way and little gate
Is all the passage, on my infancy
Thou didst lay hold, and antedate
My faith in Thee.

GEORGE HERBERT.



CHAPTER VI.

Baptismal Regeneration.

NOT long after the commencement of my acquaintance with Mr. Flavel, I received from him a very friendly invitation to become a member of a small clerical association, consisting of a few of the neighbouring clergy; the object of which, as he informed me, was, that we might meet together to read the Bible, and discuss points of Christian doctrine and practice. Of this proposal I gladly availed myself, and was duly proposed and elected. The society was conducted, ostensibly, on very liberal principles. Each member, even the youngest, was requested in his turn to propose a subject for discussion; and every one had an opportunity of delivering his opinion. I soon found, however, that instead of discussion, the meetings afforded an opportunity for my friend Mr. Flavel to inculcate his own views amongst the young clergy of the neighbourhood. This I state without the least intention of impeaching Mr. Flavel's sincerity; that gentleman firmly believed, that in diffusing his own opinion he was

diffusing the genuine truth. Nor was he at all conscious that he had a party-object in view, either in this or in the various other schemes which he was continually setting on foot. If, for instance, he was enabled to establish a branch Bible Society in any parish, he had no doubt in his own mind that his simple object was to promote the "circulation," as he termed it, of the Scriptures; and would have been extremely indignant, if he had been charged with a design to promote low-Church influence, and an approximation with the views of dissenters. Or if he succeeded in introducing a missionary meeting, it never appeared to the reverend partisan as an excuse for a religious meeting in a room instead of a church, but as simply a *bond fide* act of charity, for the advancement of the cause of Christianity amongst the heathen. It is surprising with what adroitness persons of Mr. Flavel's character so couple measures together, that, while an undeniably good object is placed on the outside view, the tendency is to promote the influence of their own party. Thus, the ostensible object of the Pastoral-Aid Society is to provide curates in populous places; whilst the actual operation is to provide curates of certain opinions, and secure to an irresponsible committee of private clergymen the patronage of all the most important curacies in the country. I am afraid that some of the leaders and promoters of these schemes cannot escape the imputation of a culpable knowledge of this double object. But the generality of the sub-

scribers and supporters of the system are no doubt quite innocent of any such design.

It is time, however, to return to the clerical meeting, which, as I have observed, though ostensibly a society for discussion, was indirectly the means of inculcating the opinions of Mr. Flavel.

One day, soon after my admission, the subject of regeneration happened to be under discussion; and when it came to my turn to speak, I opened the Prayer-book, to which I was surprised to observe that none had alluded, and, reading some portion of the baptismal service, I stated my impression that there was no doubt that the formularies of our Church were based on the doctrine that regeneration took place at baptism. But I soon found, from the expression of Mr. Flavel's face, and a certain restless movement, as well as from the look of several others of the company, that I had made a mistake, and was taking a course which did not meet with their approval. Some of the younger clergy, indeed, listened to my remarks with interest; but the elder portion appeared not at all to relish them.

Scarcely giving me time to finish my remarks, Mr. Flavel, who was the chairman, got up and spoke to the following effect:

"There was no doubt something to be said in favour of the view taken by the last speaker; indeed, there was an apparent *prima facie* argument for its truth. He said *apparent*, because he was quite sure, when his young friend had investigated

the subject more fully, he would come to an opposite conclusion from that to which he appeared then to lean. The real key to the difficulty," continued Mr. Flavel, "was, that our Church, in calling baptised children regenerate, *speaks in the language of charity*, which hopeth all things, and believeth all things; she expresses her hope and trust that the baptised person possesses, or, through God's grace, at some future time may possess, the requisite qualification."

"But"—I exclaimed.

"Allow me, my dear sir, to finish what I was stating. It is evident, therefore, that we are not to consider all children as regenerate: indeed, we know that a great many do in after-life give lamentable proof that they are not so, by the sinfulness of their conduct. We must, then, as I observed, suppose that the Church speaks in the language of charity, and, in that sense, we may without danger use the baptismal service. At the same time, I am ready to confess that I should willingly see some alterations made in the wording of some parts of it, for the purpose of clearing up the difficulty to which Mr. Leslie has alluded; and though the present service, when rightly understood, is not unscriptural or unedifying, yet if a service were to be formed *de novo*, I am inclined to think that the doctrine would not, in the present day, be put exactly in the form in which it now stands."

This appeared to me a virtual confession that

the language of the present service was opposed to his view; and I verily believe that I should have been bold enough to say so—indeed, the words were on my lips,—but Mr. Flavel anticipated me by saying—

“And now, gentlemen, as the time wears on, and all present have had an opportunity of delivering their opinion on the subject of discussion, perhaps it will be agreeable to the company if we adjourn to prepare for dinner.”

This was said in a most bland and courteous manner, and was readily acceded to by the members of the Clerical Society, who were soon engaged in discussing a leg of roast mutton and a couple of fowls, and other substantial viands, prepared for them by the hospitality of Mr. Flavel.

However, the subject dwelt on my mind; and if I could not investigate it with the help of my clerical friends, I was determined to do so by myself. The way in which it had been huddled up by Mr. Flavel was far from satisfactory; and I resolved to sift the question to the bottom. Mr. Flavel's explanation, that in declaring the child regenerate, the Church spoke the language of charity, sounded very plausible and charitable; but still I did not see how the Church could be warranted in saying what was not true, under any circumstances. Accordingly the first thing I did, as soon as I had got to my own study, was to turn to the baptismal service, and read it over carefully, in order first to

ascertain whether the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was indeed put forth as I had ventured to assert. Accordingly I took down the book of Common Prayer, and read first the exhortation with which the service commences:—

“Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, none can enter into the kingdom of God *except he be regenerate*, and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost, I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of His bounteous mercy, He will grant to this child that thing which by nature he cannot have; that he may be baptised with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ’s holy Church, and be made a lively member of the same.” Then follow two prayers, in the first of which it is stated that God did “*sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sin*,” and in the second, we call upon God, that the infant coming to holy baptism “may receive *remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration*,” and “may enjoy the everlasting benediction of God’s heavenly washing.” Afterwards, in the prayer of consecration, the minister beseeches God “that He will *sanctify the water to the mystical washing away of sin*, and grant that this child, now to be baptised therein, may receive the *fulness of God’s grace*.”

“True,” thought I; “but will not Mr. Flavel answer, that there is nothing said here which connects the inward grace with the outward cere-

mony? A child may receive the sign in his infancy, and the inward grace at any future time in his life."

This interpretation, however, was entirely precluded by what shortly followed; for as soon as the minister has baptised the child, and signed him with the sign of the cross, he turns to the congregation and says, "Seeing now, dearly beloved, that this child is *regenerate*, and grafted into the body of Christ's Church, let us give thanks to Almighty God for these benefits;" and then all kneel down and "yield hearty thanks to our merciful Father, that it *hath pleased Him to regenerate* this infant with His Holy Spirit, and to receive it for His own child by adoption."

"Why, what mockery—nay, what dishonesty—is this, to desire a congregation to thank God for a benefit as having been received, which is only future and hypothetical! Can there be a doubt as to what is the doctrine of the Church? If any doubt could exist, it was farther cleared up by the following note at the end of the service:—"It is certain by God's word, that children which are baptised, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved;" but it had before been said, in the first exhortation, that "None can enter into the kingdom of God (or be saved), *except he be regenerate*;" *ergo*, it is manifestly the doctrine of the Church, that all baptised children are regenerate. And what a comfort must it be to Christian parents to have the authority of the Church for believing that their dear departed

babes are indeed gathered into the number of God's elect, and heirs of His covenanted mercy !

But it was not only in the baptismal service that I found this doctrine prominently and unequivocally stated ; for on turning to the Catechism, or manual of Christian doctrine, which the Church puts into the hands of her children, I found the whole system based on the privileges of baptism. The child is taught, that in baptism he was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. He is told, that " being by nature born in sin, a child of wrath, he was thereby made a child of grace." Thus God embraced him, when an unconscious babe, in the arms of His mercy ; made him a free partaker of all the gifts, and graces, and privileges of redemption ; and now the time is come for him to live as an adopted child of God, and as the heir of an everlasting kingdom.

On a careful perusal of the formularies of the Church, it appeared to me as certain as words could make it, that the Church taught her children the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. But now came the farther question, namely, whether this doctrine was supported by the authority of Scripture : for the Church herself admits that " holy Scripture containeth all things necessary for salvation ; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith."

I accordingly set to work with my concordance,

and found that the word regeneration occurred only in two passages; the first was Matt. xix. 28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." This passage evidently alluded not to the mode of the regeneration of individuals, but to the regeneration of the world; the new heavens and the new earth which should succeed the present state of things. I turned therefore to the second passage (Titus iii. 4-7): "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy *He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." This appeared to me exactly to suit the case of the regeneration of infants at baptism. Here was the mercy of God exhibited, not for any works which we have done, but freely and gratuitously imparted through the instrumentality of that mystical washing of regeneration, whereby the Spirit of God was shed abundantly on the infants' hearts; they were justified, or acquitted of the guilt of original sin, and made heirs through hope of eternal life. All this appeared exactly to agree with the doctrine of the Church.

It then occurred to me that there were other passages in which the same doctrine was contained, though in different words. To be regenerated meant to be "born again." I looked out, therefore, the phrase "born again;" and this sent me directly to the third chapter of St. John, verse 3, where I read the following emphatic words of our Lord to Nicodemus: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;" which in verse 5 our Lord further explains: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of *water and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." It was impossible that words could more clearly connect the "new birth" with "baptism" than these did. I then turned to the word baptism, under which head the following passages struck me: first, the commission given by Christ to His apostles, Mark xvi. 16—"He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." If baptism be a mere outward ceremony, it is strange that it should occupy so prominent a place in this solemn commission, in which our Lord lays down in a summary manner the terms of salvation; but if baptism be the sacrament whereby all must be born again, whereby the gift of regeneration is conveyed, then truly the reason of its being insisted on is manifest. The next passage which I turned to was Galatians iii. 27—"As many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ." I then referred to 1 Cor. xii. 13—"By *one Spirit* we are all baptised into one body,

whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been made all to *drink into one Spirit.*" This proved to me the *spiritual* benefit of holy baptism, which was further confirmed by the following passages—Romans vi. 3, 4: "Know ye not that so many as were baptised into Jesus Christ were baptised into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Again, Col. ii. 12: "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him, through faith in the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." 1 Peter iii. 21: "The like figure whereunto *even baptism doth now save us* (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." I observed also in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, how carefully and pointedly it is recorded in various cases, that the sacrament of holy baptism was administered to such as desired to enter the Church immediately after a profession of faith. And it was clear that until baptism had been submitted to, a convert was not considered as a partaker of the privileges of the Gospel. Thus, when St. Paul was humbled and penitent, Ananias, the messenger of God, said unto him: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptised, and *wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts xxii. 16.

The more I investigated the subject, the more I became convinced that an important spiritual benefit was attached to baptism, or rather formed a portion of it; and that the doctrine of the Church concerning baptismal regeneration was strictly in accordance with both the letter and spirit of God's word. I took many days—nay, weeks—to look thoroughly into the subject, and drew up a statement, which I sent to my friend Mr. Flavel. He answered rather shortly, professing himself too much occupied to write a long letter: he complimented me on my diligence; but added that, according to my doctrine, if we desired to know whether a person were saved, we had nothing else to do but to look into the parish-register.

This flippancy answer a little annoyed me; and I replied, that it appeared to me scarcely a sufficiently reverent way of treating so important a doctrine. The fact of second birth having taken place could no more be annulled than the fact of the first birth could. The benefit of regeneration depended on the use made of it; and if a baptised person did not live according to his profession and privileges, he lost the benefits of his adoption. Instead of such a doctrine leading to formalism, I contended that it was impossible to conceive a more powerful stimulus to spiritual mindedness and love of God, than to follow the guidance of the Church in her catechism, and to imprint on the hearts of children a deep feeling of the great mercy which God had shewn them by making them His children by adoption and grace, and bestowing on

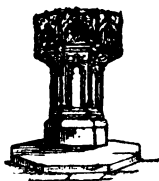
them the seeds of holiness, which if duly cherished would grow up unto eternal life. And what appeal would fall more strongly on the heart of the sinner than to remind him of benefits which he had received ; the possibility of recovering his forfeited birthright by repentance ; and the great ingratitude, as well as danger, if he neglected so great salvation ? And what a different aspect did it give of the relation in which we stood to our brethren around us, if we looked on them as adopted sons of God, brethren of Christ and of ourselves, and heirs through hope of God's everlasting kingdom !

I began to feel very strongly on the subject—preached several times about it, and, as I thought, with effect. The office of baptism was more reverently attended. People discerned that it was something more than the mere ceremony of naming the child. It now appeared to me a great principle of the Church to secure souls to Christ at the first, and then to keep them. This view encouraged my exertions in the schools, and led me to view the children in a much more solemn and interesting light than I had hitherto done ; and to think more of the vital importance of training them up in godly ways ; so that they might not forfeit, through wilful and habitual sin, the benefits of their baptismal regeneration.

I verily believe it was this discussion about the doctrine of regeneration that saved me from evangelicalism, into which I was fast descending. I had

been struck with the usefulness and apparent zeal of Mr. Flavel, and others of his way of thinking, — had made him my counsellor, and adopted many of his views. But this discussion staggered me. I did not for a moment consider Mr. Flavel as dishonest; but I thought there must be some strange perversion of the understanding which could explain away the scriptural doctrine held by the Church of baptismal regeneration. If Mr. Flavel could so palpably distort the language of our formularies, supported as they were by Scripture, in one instance, how could I trust his advice in other matters? Was it not possible to find pious and zealous men who were more cordially attached to the doctrines of their own Church?

These considerations dwelt on my mind, and increased my thoughtfulness.



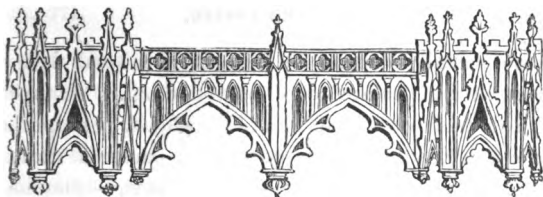
High and low,

Watchwords of party, on all tongues are rife :

As if a Church, though sprung from Heaven, must owe
To opposites and fierce extremes her life —

Not to the golden mean, and quiet flow
Of truths which soften hatred, temper strife.

WORDSWORTH.



CHAPTER VII.

The Visitation.

ABOUT this time a circumstance occurred which had a great influence on my subsequent life. It must be remembered that my theological studies had been very limited. Previously to my ordination, I had read next to nothing of controversial divinity. Since I had been ordained, my reading had been confined chiefly to such books as aided me in getting up materials for my sermons, which consisted of a most indiscriminate dipping into the "old English divines," without the slightest regard to their difference of views : and nothing having hitherto called my attention to the controversies of the day, I knew as little of modern publication as I did of the ancient fathers.

This is rather a point of difficulty with the modern race of clergy. Many who are settled in remote districts do very commonly, notwithstanding the facilities afforded by magazines, reviews, penny-postage, and other modern inventions, live almost separate from the rest of the world. I have known some

who actually decline to take in a printed letter, though the postage costs them nothing. Wrapped up in their own little affairs; engaged, perhaps, in the conscientious discharge of their parochial duties, or, it may be, in very trifling occupations,—they lose sight of the fact, that they are members of a great and influential body, the Church, one principal source of whose influence for good is united action. While the Papists and Dissenters are linked together and organised, so as to make the most of their strength, Churchmen are too often entirely dissociated from each other; and it is almost impossible to move them to act as an united body. This indifference in the parochial minister communicates itself to the members of his flock, insomuch that there are many whole parishes which stand isolated, as it were, from the rest of the Church,—parishes from which not a shilling is sent in support of the efforts the Church is making for the increase of Christ's kingdom, whether abroad or at home; not a vote or petition to be obtained, though the need be ever so urgent. It is in a great measure to this apathy that we must attribute the comparatively small progress of the noble scheme undertaken by the Church for the education of the people. If the clergy will not support it as a body, the scheme will probably fail, and the State be compelled to take up the work. We shall then be obliged, with reluctance, to submit to any latitudinarian measure of educating Churchmen, Dissenters, and Papists together, which the go-

vernment of the day may be urged to adopt. Still, though with our lamentably insufficient number of bishops, it is very difficult to secure united action in the body of the Church, yet if our present bishops, archdeacons, rural deans, and parochial clergy, would bestir themselves, there is good reason to hope that this most destructive measure may yet be averted, and the Church assume her proper place as the efficient superintendent of the education of the people. Already several dioceses have set an example of what may be done, in educating a superior race of schoolmasters, providing sound commercial schools for the middle classes, and raising the character of our national schools. I am sure, however, that it is an undertaking which needs the earnest co-operation of all true friends of the Church to bring it to a prosperous issue.

But to return to my narrative. The circumstance to which I am now about to direct the attention of the reader occurred at the archidiaconal visitation, which is one of those rare opportunities afforded to the clergy of meeting together. On this occasion the preacher was my friend Mr. Flavel; and he availed himself of the office to denounce certain doctrines which had lately arisen at Oxford, and were contained in a series of publications called *Tracts for the Times*: "A most ill-chosen name," said Mr. Flavel; for writings less suited to the times he never met with; attempting, as they did, to revive, in the enlightened nineteenth century, the supersti-

tion and formalities of former days, and approaching very nearly on the corruption of popery. I had heard these Tracts spoken of, but had not read one of them, and was quite ignorant of their contents. Nevertheless, after dinner, when one of the company rose, and in a set speech eulogised Mr. Flavel's sermon, and requested that it might be printed, as an antidote to the pestilential and dangerous doctrines which were creeping in amongst them, I found myself, from mere thoughtless impulse, joining in the request, and thumping the table as loudly as the rest of my brethren.

I happened to sit next a gentleman of the name of Manwaring, whom I had seen two or three times before, and had conceived a great regard for, considering the few occasions on which we had met. He was about forty years of age. His countenance was remarkably mild and intellectual, and his conversation instructive and agreeable. During the speech of the gentleman who had proposed the printing of Mr. Flavel's sermon, I observed that my neighbour leaned his head on his hand, shading his eyes; but, by the knitting of his forehead and compression of his lips, it was evident that he was annoyed by the observations of the speaker. When the applause had subsided, Mr. Manwaring arose from his seat, and, with great calmness of manner, expressed himself as follows :—

“ Mr. Archdeacon, and reverend brethren,— it is with very great pain that I rise to express my non-

concurrence in the proposal made by the gentleman who has just spoken. It is not my intention to make any comments on the sermon which has been preached before you this morning. It contains strong reflections on the writings of certain clergymen, who, though not connected with this diocese, are well known at the University of Oxford as most learned and pious men, who have devoted their abilities to what they consider the interests of the Church, and whose professed object is to restore her to her true condition, as represented in her offices and formularies. For myself, I revere their object; nor have I yet seen any thing which leads me to suspect the wisdom or sincerity of their efforts. I speak merely as an individual. The adverse opinion expressed in the sermon of this morning is also the opinion of the individual who expressed it. He alone is responsible for it. But if we join in the request that the sermon may be printed, we do, to a certain extent, join with him in the condemnation of the persons from whom those writings have emanated. Now I would request my reverend brethren, to be allowed to ask them one question — *Have they read the Tracts which they are about to condemn?*”

Not a soul answered in the affirmative.

“I would beg to ask the reverend preacher himself, whether *he* has read them? because, from several passages in his sermon, I confess it appeared to me that he had *not*.”

Mr. Flavel, thus appealed to, confessed, with

some confusion, that he had not read the Tracts themselves, but certain extracts in a magazine, which were amply sufficient, in his opinion, to condemn them.

This statement was not at all satisfactory to the meeting, and some symptoms of indignation were manifested; others attempted to laugh the matter off.

"I must again put it to your candour," continued Mr. Manwaring, "whether you will join in passing a censure on clergymen whose writings you have not read yourselves, and respecting which you have heard only the statement of one who confesses that he has read merely extracts? I have myself read every one of the Tracts under discussion; and though I should be unwilling to pledge myself to all the doctrines and statements contained in them, yet I do not hesitate to confess my opinion, that they are the most valuable and important publications which have appeared of late years, and likely to prove of eminent utility to the Church."

The justice of this appeal was felt by those present. The Archdeacon rose and said, that Mr. Manwaring's view appeared to him a right one. It was unfair virtually to condemn persons without more information than those present seemed to possess. Perhaps before their next meeting, they would have had an opportunity of reading the Tracts in question, and would be in a fitter condition to pronounce an opinion upon them.

The Archdeacon, it should be observed, was one

of those judicious persons who consider that in their official capacity it is right to avoid the character of partisans. Though the heads of the Church must of course have opinions of their own, yet he judged that it was inexpedient for men in their stations to join themselves to any party. Parties there always had been, and always would be. Those in authority were most profitably employed in moderating the acerbity of faction, rather than augmenting it by their active partisanship.

After this declaration on the part of the Arch-deacon, the matter dropped, and the party shortly broke up.



**Heart-searching things are these, and shake the mind,
Yea, like the rushing of a mighty wind.**

CRABBE.



CHAPTER VIII.

Tracts for the Times.

THIS incident made a deep impression on my mind. My former friend and adviser, Mr. Flavel, certainly had not appeared to advantage. It was not right to make a public attack on men of whose works he had so very superficial a knowledge. On the other hand, both the conduct and manner of Mr. Manwaring had greatly prepossessed me in his favour. His calm, Christian, and sensible tone; his evident superiority to the rest of us; the respect paid to him by the Archdeacon,—all operated on my judgment. I thought I should like to know more of him. At any rate, I resolved at least to read the writings which he recommended; and accordingly I ordered the Tracts, which already amounted to thirty or forty, at my bookseller's; and as soon as they arrived, I set to work, paper-cutter in hand, at the beginning.

The first Tract which I took up was on the "Ministerial Commission." This I read over; and though it contained matter which was new to me, I was not at first much struck with it.

It seemed rather hastily and carelessly written ; and to some of the statements I decidedly objected : for instance, in speaking of the Bishops, it said, " Black event as it would be for the country, yet (as far as they are concerned) we could not wish them a more blessed termination of their course, than the spoiling of their goods and martyrdom." Surely this is wrong, I thought. St. Paul says to Titus, " I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men ; for kings and for *all that are in authority*, that we may lead a *quiet and peaceable life* in all godliness and honesty." Accordingly in the litany we pray, " that we being *hurt by no persecution*, may evermore give thanks unto God in His holy Church." Surely it is strange to pray that we ourselves " may be hurt by no persecution," and yet wish our Bishops " no better termination of their course than the spoiling of their goods and martyrdom ;" nay, rather we are instructed, in the office for the Consecration of Bishops, to pray that " the people may obediently follow them," that they may have strength and power " to withstand and convince gainsayers," and " banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine, and maintain and set forward *quietness, love, and peace*, among all men : " we also pray to the Holy Ghost, both for them and for ourselves—

" Keep far our foes, give peace at home :
Where Thou art guide, no ill can come."

No, thought I; surely the writer of the Tract No. I. is rather fantastic in wishing the Bishops no better fate than spoiling of goods and martyrdom. Perhaps we shall find some more instances of this exaggerated feeling. I therefore read the Tract again carefully; but notwithstanding my prejudice against it, and expectation of finding faults, I rose from the second perusal much more impressed with its contents than before. How very important it is, I reflected, to know *whence a minister receives authority to exercise his functions*—whether from God, or from the State, or from the choice of the people! And assuredly it is most true, as the Tract sets forth, that the real basis of a minister's authority to exercise his priestly functions, is the divine appointment which he has received by the solemn laying on of the hands of God's servants the Bishops. "Take thou authority to execute the office of deacons." "Take thou authority to preach the word of God, and to minister the holy sacraments."—If the Bishop did not in these words convey to me a real authority, the words are unmeaning, nay, profane. Again, "Receive thou the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a priest in the Church of God, now committed to thee by the imposition of our hands." Here the *mode* in which the authority is conveyed is plainly stated. How can a man belong to the Church of England—and, still more, how can he undertake the office of the ministry—without believing this to be the authority on which every minister acts?

But, then, has the Bishop himself power to confer this authority? Who gave the Bishop power to commission others? I turned to the service of the Consecration of Bishops, and read first the following question, which occurs amongst those put by the Archbishop to the Bishop: "Wilt thou be faithful in ordaining, sending, or laying hands upon others?" To which the Bishop elect makes answer, "I will so be, by the help of God." Then I read the following words, wherein the Archbishop confers on the Bishop, whom he consecrates, the episcopal authority: "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of bishop in the Church of God, now committed to thee by the imposition of our hands, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen." From this it appeared evident that it was the doctrine of our Church, that the authority of each bishop to ordain ministers was derived in succession from bishop after bishop, from the time of the Apostles, whom Christ our Lord first appointed, and commanded to ordain others after them.

What a clear, practical, scriptural, and most important doctrine was this! and yet how little had I ever thought of it, or insisted on it! My parishioners, I was persuaded, would have laughed at the idea of my having any divine authority to teach them; they looked on me, as well as the rector, as exercising our ministry by the law of the land; and since the law of the land tolerates other teachers, they had no notion but that it is perfectly lawful for them to join them-

selves to the ministry of any sectarian preacher whom they might happen to fancy. As to their breaking a divine command, they would never dream that they were doing so : but if it be so, how very necessary is it that God's minister should insist on the divine commission, in order to save the people from the sin of despising an ordinance of God !

I then bethought me of the practical tendency of the doctrine. How sacred is the relation between a minister and his flock, if it is one of divine appointment ! What a difference is there between a mere teacher chosen by the people or a state-functionary, and an ambassador of God ! How holy is the relation ! how stringent on both parties ! How must the impression of the divine authority constrain the minister to act worthily of his high calling—to keep and guard the flock so committed to his care ! what encouragement it must give him ! And if the same feeling were spread through a congregation, how much greater must be their reverence and regard for one whom they knew to be set over them by God ! How would all my difficulties be relieved, if the solemn truth were practically impressed on myself and those committed to my charge !

Then it occurred to me, how great must be the sin and danger of those who venture to minister in divine things, especially the holy sacraments, without authority to do so. This point had never struck me before. I had generally abstained from advertising to dissenters in my sermons, from a sort of

notion that it was illiberal and unpopular : but now I considered how great was my responsibility, if, through false candour or negligence, any should leave the communion of the Church ; or any schismatical teacher should be emboldened to take upon himself the office of minister without episcopal authority. In short, the more I thought on the subject, the more important did it appear, and pregnant with practical consequences.

The impression left on my mind after reading and thinking on this Tract, and comparing it with the doctrine of the Church and the authority of Scripture, was, that the argument was most cogent and the doctrine most certain.

However, it was time to pass on to the remainder of the Tracts, which increased in interest as I proceeded. Occasionally, indeed, passages occurred with which I could not agree ; but this was no more than what every one probably feels whatever book he may be reading, especially if the subject be one on which he has not much thought before. The great value of the Tracts seemed to be, that, in a plain and earnest manner, many truths were brought forward of which I had thought but little before ; yet which, when I *did* think of them, appeared undeniable and important.

The following were the principal propositions contained in the first portion of the Tracts.

I. First, that which I have already noted, that the authority by which a Christian minister exercises his

function is derived, not from the State nor from the congregation, but from God Himself, through the imposition of the hands of the Bishop, in regular succession from the Apostles. Such was the doctrine of the *apostolic succession*. From this doctrine many important corollaries arose:—the sinfulness of those who presumed to take the ministerial office upon themselves without the divine commission; the probable invalidity of the sacraments administered by such persons, and the comparative inefficiency of all their ministerial acts: and again, the holy, stringent, and beneficial nature of the relation which existed between a divinely commissioned minister and his flock.

II. The second great point insisted on in the Tracts was, the nature of *the Christian Church*, its visibility and unity.¹ This also was most important. We all profess that we believe “one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church,” which, as expressly stated by St. Paul, is “the pillar and ground of the truth,” and which we are bound to hear. It could not be merely the body of sincere believers known to God alone; it must be a visible body, else we could not hear it, nor could it be of any value to us as the pillar and ground of the truth. Then as to its unity. It must continue in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship. It must maintain the body of Christian

¹ On this subject, and some others, I have dwelt less diffusely, in order not to repeat what has been said on them in the “Portrait of a Churchman;” besides a variety of other publications which have issued from the press.

truth taught by the Apostles, and must retain the apostolic fellowship or succession of ministers.

Now the present state of things existing in the country appeared to me clean contrary to this definition of a Church ; and altogether different from the state of things which existed in the time of the Apostles, according to what we read in the Bible. The idea of different denominations refusing to worship or communicate together, and engaged in angry contention, was as different from the notion of one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, in which I professed my belief, as one thing could possibly differ from another. It was certainly wholly unscriptural and wrong. But if so, then clearly those who had wilfully left the true Church, and lived in separation from it, and would not worship or communicate with it, were in a dangerous and sinful state of schism.

To say this of dissenters would, no doubt, appear to them very uncharitable and illiberal. But what was to be done ? Were we to keep back the truth ? No, surely ; if truth it was, it must be preached.

III. The next point insisted on in the Tracts was, the *value of ordinances*, especially the sacraments instituted by our Lord, as channels of divine grace. This was closely connected with the former proposition ; for if ministers were not duly commissioned, what was the value of the sacraments which they pretended to administer, or of even the commonest ordinances in which they officiated ? Then I remembered the little store set on the sacraments by dissenters—their

denial of the accompanying grace of regeneration in the sacrament of baptism—their notion that the holy Eucharist was a mere ceremony in remembrance of our Lord's dying love, and not, at the same time, a communion of His body and blood. Even in our own Church the sacraments had fallen into sad neglect. In my parish the Lord's Supper was celebrated but thrice a year—the smallest possible number of times; and though the number of communicants had been doubled, yet they were still lamentably few, and consisted not of a third part of the congregation. Again, as to the ordinances; I felt conscience-struck with the fact, that I had utterly neglected the observance of the fasts and festivals, though they are just as much enjoined by the Church as the Sunday service. A clergyman had clearly as much right to close his church on the Sunday as on one of the Saints' days, for which an express service was appointed; and, strange to say, with this total neglect of many of the ordinances of the Church, I not unfrequently preached to the people about the danger of placing too great a reliance on ordinances! I could not but confess to myself, that in this matter I had acted very inconsistently and wrongly.

In perusing my bundle of Tracts, I did not neglect to bear in mind the accusation which had been alleged against them, of having a popish tendency. The reason of this is obvious, thought I; but the accusation is not just. Unquestionably the papists exalt the Church, and so do the Tracts. But there is a

great difference in their views. The papists exalt their own portion of the Church existing in the present day ;—the Tracts exalt the Church universal. The papists make the Church superior to the Word of God ;—the Tracts represent the Church as she is represented in the Articles,¹ a keeper and witness of Holy Writ, and as having authority in controversies of faith : yet not so as that she may decree any thing against the same, or enforce any thing besides the same to be believed for necessity of salvation. Therefore there is no similarity between the Tracts and the papists in their exaltation of the Church. The papists exalt the Church too much ; and the Tracts, it may be, just as they ought. The papists, again, lay great stress on ordinances ; and so do the writers of the Tracts. But the Tracts do not advocate the corrupt and superstitious ceremonies of Rome : they only insist on the ordinances of our own Church—those which are enjoined in our book of Common Prayer. Because papists carry ceremonies to excess, there is no reason why we should neglect them. It is surely most unjust for those who disregard the ordinances of their own Church to accuse those who insist on them, of being unsound Churchmen. Besides, when people have fallen into such obvious neglect of ordinances, we ought to be much obliged to those who recal us to our duty.

On the whole, though I had been previously inclined towards the evangelical doctrine, from observ-

¹ See Article xx.

ing the activity and piety of many clergymen attached to that party,—yet, on reading these Tracts, I found that both my understanding was convinced, and my feelings carried along with them. There were, indeed, many passages, which, like that in the first Tract already noted, appeared to me overstrained and fanciful; and there were many points on which I desired further information; but the general tenour of them seemed to my unbiassed judgment undeniably true, and most important.



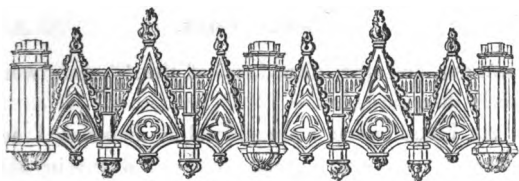
There abides
In his allotted home a genuine priest,
The shepherd of his flock

The calm delights
Of unambitious piety he chose.

• • • • •

Hither in prime of manhood he withdrew
From academic bowers.

WORDSWORTH.



CHAPTER IX.

A new Friend.

BEING much impressed with the extreme importance of the questions which had been presented to my mind ; convinced that they were no abstract points of speculation, but subjects which affected the practical working of the whole system of the Christian faith,—I determined to put into immediate effect the plan which I had before conceived, of consulting with Mr. Manwaring, who had been the original cause of my embarking in the inquiry. Accordingly the next day I rode over to his residence, which was about fifteen miles distant—beyond the usual range of mere visiting acquaintance, which was the reason why I had so seldom met him.

On knocking at the door, I was informed by the servant that her master was at church, and would not return home for half an hour, as there was a full service. It then occurred to me that it was the feast of St. John the Baptist ; and my conscience smote me that in my own parish the day was marked by no comme-

moration, and the directions of the Church were utterly disregarded.

As I had come a considerable distance, I accepted the servant's invitation to sit down in Mr. Manwaring's library, and await his return. The room into which I was shewn exhibited manifest signs of the occupations of the owner. At one end was a small bookcase filled with Bibles, Prayer-books, and tracts, evidently for distribution amongst his parishioners; and two good rows of well-thumbed volumes, which seemed to constitute the lending-library. The table near them was covered with papers carefully tied up with red tape and labelled, and several books, the outsides of which (for of course I did not open them) indicated that they were parochial ledgers or memorandum-books. Another side of the room was filled with a large bookcase extending from the top to the bottom, the lowest part containing rows of most learned-looking folios, the rest occupied with modern works of all descriptions. Near it was a desk for reading, on which lay a volume of St. Chrysostom, evidently in use; and on a table not far off was a heap of periodicals, and a paper-cutter, pen, ink, and paper-case, and a letter-rack, the "unanswered" division of which was apparently empty. All this shewed the diversified range of Mr. Manwaring's studies, while at the same time there was an air of order and regularity in the room not always seen in the private retreats of men whose occupations are manifold. Nothing more clearly indicates

the character, or at least the occupations, of a man, than an inspection of his study. The interior of Mr. Manwaring's gave the impression, which I afterwards found to be most correct, that he was a man of learning, an active parish priest, and well acquainted with the doings and writings of the day. And nothing could have enabled him to compass so large a range of subjects but the orderly system which he pursued, and the careful management of his time.

After the expiration of about half an hour, I saw the congregation issuing from ~~the~~ church, and was much surprised to observe that it was so numerous. It proved, however, what a good and active man may do to restore the ancient discipline, and bring a parish back to regular habits of Christian devotion.

Mr. Manwaring received me with great friendliness, and apologised for having kept me waiting. "But my servant informed you, I trust, how I have been engaged?"

"I ought to feel shame for not having been engaged in the same manner. But do you not find," continued I, "that the daily service (for I understood that he had a daily service) interferes very much with your studies and parochial duties?"

"On the contrary, I find that after the excitement of writing or attending to parochial business, it calms and tranquillises the mind. It has also the effect of keeping me at home."

"Yours is not a large population; but there are many parishes in which it would be impossible for a

clergyman to have daily service—at least without neglecting other very important branches of his duty.”

“Certainly, for one clergyman it might be, as you say, in many parishes impracticable. Therefore it is well that it is left, as the Church seems to leave it, to the discretion and conscience of each minister.”

I then proceeded to thank him for having been the cause of my reading the *Tracts for the Times*; and told how much I had been struck by the general argument; but that certain difficulties had arisen in my mind.

“I will not promise to remove all your difficulties,” answered Mr. Manwaring, “but I shall be happy to discuss them with you; and perhaps they may appear less formidable than you now suppose them.”

I then particularly instanced the doctrine of the *apostolic succession*. With regard to the general argument, there could not, as it appeared to me, be the slightest doubt that our Lord commissioned His Apostles to teach all nations, and empowered them to commission others after them in continual succession; and that we in the English Church act under this commission. “But,” I added, “suppose they to whom this commission is given preach erroneous doctrine, as it is very possible, what is then the duty of the people?”

Mr. Manwaring proceeded to solve my difficulty in the following manner:—

“It is most certain, as you have said, that in the commencement of Christianity our Lord sent out His Apostles, and they others after them, to preach the Gospel; and it was ordained that they who believed their word, and received from them the sacrament of baptism, should be saved. You will observe, however, that even the first who were ordained were not authorised to preach their own opinions, but only what they had received from the Apostles. Thus our Lord bade His Apostles go to all nations, ‘teaching them to observe all things *whatsoever I have commanded you.*’¹ And St. Paul said to Timothy—‘*The things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*’

“But,” I interposed, “though it is likely that St. Timothy, being instructed in the facts and doctrines of the Gospel by St. Paul himself, or even one who received them from St. Timothy, might preach them correctly; yet, it is more than probable that, after being transmitted from hand to hand many times, they would become corrupt.”

“Certainly: and doubtless for this reason it was that God, in His great mercy, caused the Scriptures of the New Testament to be written by His inspired Apostles before they departed to their rest. These Scriptures were received by the Church as containing every thing which was to ‘be believed as an article of faith, or thought requisite or necessary for

¹ Matt. xxviii. 20.

salvation.’¹ And thenceforth those who were ordained by the Bishops as pastors and preachers of the word, were authorised to preach, not just what they chose, but only what was contained in that book.”

“ But we find practically that those who profess to preach the Gospel often set forth contradictory doctrines. Dissenters interpret Scripture differently from the Church; and even in the Church itself there is a good deal of discrepancy.

“ Absolute uniformity in human teachers is not to be expected. But if the regulations of our own Church were acted on, a very near approach to uniformity might be attained; for it is enjoined on preachers by the canons of the English Church, not only that they shall preach as of necessity to salvation only what is contained in the Bible, but ‘*what the Catholic fathers and ancient bishops have collected from the same doctrine.*’”

“ If I may judge from those folios which I see in your library and on your desk, *you*, at least, have no difficulty in knowing what has been taught by the ancient fathers and bishops; but how are those who are not so learned to proceed?”

“ It were much to be wished that candidates for ordination devoted more time to the study of the fathers. Still, we have practically the pith and substance of the Church’s tradition in our book of Common Prayer, according to which every minister of the Church is bound to instruct his flock.

¹ See Article vi.

If we preach according to the doctrine contained in the Prayer-book, we preach the doctrine of the primitive Church; and if we do not preach according to the Prayer-book, that book itself, *which we must read to the people*, will go far to correct our errors. You see, therefore, how many checks and counter-checks are provided by the Church, in order to secure that the people shall receive sound doctrine—a series of safeguards by which the dissenter is entirely unprotected. First, there is the divine commission of the minister, which the dissenter does not pretend to have. Secondly, instruction is to be given according to Scripture, *the whole of which, from beginning to end*, with very small exception, is ordered to be read in our churches: whereas the dissenting preacher may make what selection he chooses; and it is certain that in their meeting-houses many portions of Scripture are never read or adverted to from one year's end to another; so that those who attend them receive a very imperfect impression of what the Bible, as a whole, really is. Thirdly, the interpretation of Scripture is to be according to the teaching of the Church as set forth in the book of Common Prayer: whereas the dissenter is entirely without rule or standard, and may preach to the people any doctrine which he may fancy to be the interpretation of Scripture. The value of this last check is very great; for if, as no doubt it does sometimes happen, in spite of all their advantages, a clergyman does not preach the true and entire doc-

trine of the Gospel, still it is in a manner preached to the people by the reading of the whole Scripture and of the Church service. For instance, if a clergyman neglects to preach the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, still the people have it in the baptismal service ; so that it cannot be altogether lost so long as that service remains unmutated : or if he shrink from setting forth the scriptural doctrine, that we are judged and rewarded according to our works, still this vital truth will be continually brought before the people both in the Bible and the Prayer-book, and cannot be withheld from the congregation through the error or deficiency of the preacher. On the whole, then, although whatsoever is committed to erring men must, to a certain extent, be liable to abuse and corruption, yet I think that a candid consideration will convince the inquirer, that in the English Catholic Church, independently of its claim to our adherence on account of its divine origin, and of God's promise to be with it always to the end of the world, there is also the greatest security, humanly speaking, that sound doctrine shall be preached. While the treasure of great price is committed to earthen vessels, there cannot be an absolute certainty that it shall be duly kept by all : yet with the limitations and aids provided in our reformed Church, there is every reasonable probability that our congregation will not be misled ; or even if they are misled for a while, still the palpable deviation of any preacher from true doctrine, as in the

cases to which I have before alluded, will become so evident as to rouse attention, and guard the congregation against a partial system of teaching. Meanwhile the services and sacraments cannot be tampered with, if the churchwardens and parishioners do their duty, in presenting one who ventures to do so to the bishop."

This argument of my friend entirely did away my objections to the doctrines of the apostolic succession on this score, though there were still certain collateral points on which I was not satisfied.



Must all tradition, then, be laid aside ?
That to affirm were ignorance or pride.
Are there not many points, some needful sure
To saving faith, which Scripture leaves obscure ?
Which every sect will wrest a several way ;
For what one sect interprets, all sects may.

DRYDEN.



CHAPTER X.

On Tradition.

AFTER a short pause, I observed — “ You made use of an expression just now which reminds me of another objection that struck me in the Tracts, namely, with regard to the authority of tradition. Now, certainly, I had always thought that we Protestants had nothing to do with tradition, but left all that to the Church of Rome. The very name of tradition is offensive to a true Protestant.”

Mr. M. “ Yet surely that must be a prejudice. A member of the Church of England, at least, cannot consistently object to tradition ; for we have an express Article ‘ Of the Tradition of the Church.’¹ ‘ Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the *traditions* and ceremonies of the Church, which be not repugnant to the Word of God, and be ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly (that others may fear to do the like), as he that offendeth against the common order of the Church, and hurt-

¹ Art. xxxiv.

eth the authority of the magistrate, and woundeth the conscience of weak brethren.' And no reader of the Bible can consistently object to the use of the word tradition. •St. Paul says to the Thessalonians, 'Stand fast, and keep the *traditions* which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.'¹ And again: 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the *tradition* which he received of us.'"²

Mr. L. "And yet, on the other hand, we know that our Lord accused the Jews of transgressing the commandments of God, 'and making the law of none effect by their traditions.'³ There seems to me a contradiction."

Mr. M. "I confess I do not see any sort of contradiction or difficulty in these texts. They only prove that *there are bad traditions, which we ought to eschew; and good traditions, which we ought to follow.*"

Mr. L. "Certainly, what you say seems to explain the apparent discrepancy."

Mr. M. "Nevertheless, I allow that considerable perplexity has arisen from the lax and indiscriminate use which modern, and indeed ancient writers have made of the word 'tradition,' and the variety of senses in which it has been employed."

Mr. L. "But, tell me," said I, somewhat inop-

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 15.

² 2 Thess. iii. 6.

³ Matt. xv. 6.

portunately interrupting his argument, "what credit can possibly be due to statements which are not written in Scripture, but handed down by oral tradition from generation to generation?"

Mr. M. "That is a question often triumphantly asked by modern controversialists, and considered by them to settle the dispute. It rests on the assumption, that 'tradition' and 'oral tradition' are synonymous,—which is entirely gratuitous. Oral tradition is only one sort of tradition; therefore your objection, which is only to the oral part of it, does not apply to tradition generally."

Mr. L. "I begin to think that no satisfactory conclusion can be arrived at, unless we have a regular logical definition of tradition, or at least a mutual understanding as to what it means. Will you tell me, my dear sir, what tradition really is?"

Mr. M. "I will endeavour to do so. You are quite right as to the importance of settling the meaning of the term. To have done so would have saved controversialists a great deal of unnecessary trouble:—To begin, then, *secundum artem*. Tradition, as I need scarcely remind you, is derived from the Latin word *trado*, which signifies 'to hand down.' But it is important to observe, that the English word tradition answers to two Latin words, *traditio* and *traditum*. Tradition (*traditio*) is the act of handing down; a tradition (*traditum*) is a thing handed down. Now the modes of handing down are various. A thing may possibly be handed down from

generation to generation by mere word of mouth, and never committed to writing; or it may be handed down in writing; or it may be handed down for two or three generations by word of mouth, and then committed to writing, and form a portion of history. Again, it may be handed down in a single line, or in a great many; perhaps by the concurrent testimony of all who have written or spoken on the subject. Here you will see at once the immense difference in the value of tradition."

I made no answer to Mr. Manwaring's description of tradition. Thus far appeared all perfectly clear and undeniable. So he proceeded—

"Little as some men value tradition, or are aware of the obligation which they owe to it, it is, however, in reality the main source of almost all the knowledge we possess. *It is the great stream of knowledge, feeling, and belief, which we receive from bygone ages.* That which each age discovers for itself is little in comparison with what it receives by tradition from the ages which have gone before it. How did each one of us come to know that there was a God in heaven? Did we discover it by philosophical deduction from the appearances of nature? Did we learn it from studying His written word? No; surely we must acknowledge that there is a God, before we can receive the Bible as His word. No; we received this great truth and many others by tradition. It was when we sat upon our mother's knee that we received from her the knowledge of

the great truths of religion. She it was who told us that there was a great unseen Being called God, above, around us, about our path by day, and about our bed by night ; who had made us and all the world, and to whose glory we were made to live. And when our mind was capable of receiving further truth, it was she who told us of our fallen nature, and of the redemption of the world by the sacrifice of the Son of God ; and then, taking the catechism, which the Church had furnished for her assistance, she taught us that we were each made partakers of that great benefit, when at our baptism we were made ‘ children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.’ In return for which great kindness, it had been promised for us, on our parts, that we would renounce the service of sin, believe in God, and serve Him : all which things we might do, and so obtain our heavenly inheritance, through the Holy Spirit aiding us.

“ *Thus, before we could read the word of God, we received the substance of religious truth from tradition.* It was handed down to us by our parents, as they had received it from theirs. Nor was it religious truth alone, but a large portion of our knowledge, our habits, our feelings, our prejudices, our turn of thought, our national character, the very constitution of our bodies, all descended to us from those before us. Much we received from our parents, much from our teachers and masters, much

by intercourse with those older or wiser than ourselves, much from books—especially the history of former ages. In short, we are but as fibres in the great tree of human life, all bound together into one system ; minute links in a complicated chain ; monads in the ocean of existence, deriving our colour and character from those who have gone before us, and transmitting it to those after us.”

Mr. L. “ I feel something like the bourgeois gentilhomme in Moliere, when he found that he had been speaking prose all his life. I have been living in an atmosphere of tradition without being aware of it. But are you not trenching too closely on the Socialist’s theory, that we are irresponsible beings, the mere creatures of circumstances ? ”

Mr. M. “ No ; I have only shewn as yet one view of the subject ; for though it is an unquestionable fact, that the greater part of our knowledge and feelings is thus derived by tradition from others ; yet each of us is endowed with a will and conscience, which makes him responsible for his continuance or non-continuance in the tradition which he has received. For instance, when our parents taught us concerning the redemption of the world by the Son of God, they pointed to the sacred volume, and told us that what they taught was there revealed. And when we came to years of understanding, we were bound to search the Scripture, and see whether it be so.”

Mr. L. “ I am glad you have given this expla-

nation, for it furnishes an answer to another objection which was upon my lips, namely, that if, as it appears certain, we receive so much by tradition from others, we are as likely to be imbued with the immense mass of erroneous views and notions which are prevalent in the world, as to receive the truth. I would advert simply to the case of Dissenters—Wesleyans, for instance, or Socinians, or Papists, who, as we believe, are born and educated in an erroneous system.”

Mr. M. “Your observation is perfectly correct, and brings us back to our original position, namely, that *there are bad traditions, which we ought to eschew; and good traditions, which we ought to follow.* Tradition, of which we can trace the origin to some mere human teacher, is of no greater weight than the authority of that teacher himself; but tradition derived from the beginning, and transmitted by the universal Church, is surely such as an individual Christian would be most presumptuous in rejecting. Indeed, it is impossible to overrate the authority and stringency of such tradition, provided only we are careful to receive it as subordinate to the written word of God.”

Mr. L. “Well, you have explained to me the meaning of tradition, considered as *the act of handing down*, and have shewn that it is a most extensive source of information; allow me now to ask you for some instances of traditions (*tradita*), or things handed down to us by tradition, which will perhaps

serve to shew what we are to receive, and what we are to reject."

Mr. M. " They are of course equally extensive with the tradition by which they were received. The Bible itself has been called by some writers a tradition; *certainly the genuineness and authenticity of it are so.* How do we know that the Bible is the real word of God? that what we now read as the revelation of God's will is what was written at His command by the apostles and evangelists? We know it from the concurrent tradition of the universal Church, which received it as such, and from age to age has preserved and handed it down. Hence, in the 20th Article, we call the Church 'the witness and keeper of holy writ.' The next important subject of tradition is *the right interpretation of Scripture.* The immense importance of knowing how the word of God was understood by those who first received it, will be evident when we consider the pernicious errors into which many men in the present day, and, indeed, in every age of the world, have fallen. First of all, we have the creeds, which contain the tradition of the Church as to what is the general plan or outline of scriptural truth. If each of us took the Bible, and attempted to draw up a scheme for himself, it is very probable that we should not fix on those great truths which are contained in the creeds; but disagree very much in our judgment regarding the relative importance of Christian truths. But now no man need go wrong, because we have received

from tradition a form of sound words, which has been considered from the beginning as a summary of the chief Christian truths. Again; to take those great doctrines separately—tradition furnishes us here also with most valuable aid; especially we might instance the important doctrine of the nature of the Son of God. Looking at the Bible only, it is well known that some have denied His distinct and equal Godhead. They have argued that it is written, ‘My Father is greater than I;’¹ and though it is also written, ‘I and my Father are one,’² yet they have contended that *that* might mean an unity of will or action, and not an unity of substance. How could this most important point be settled? It was settled by the concurrent tradition or testimony of the universal Church collected at the Council of Nice, and embodied in the Nicene Creed, and afterwards enlarged in the Athanasian, in which the true interpretation, as received from the beginning of the Gospel-dispensation, is, as it were, embalmed for ever in the tradition of the Church. Take another instance: We know from the writings of the fathers, and from Church history in general, that there have always been bishops in the Church. Therefore, even should we judge that the text of Scripture is not absolutely imperative as to the necessity of that mode of government, yet the universal tradition of the Church concurring with what we do find in Scripture, renders the institution of the episcopate so ob-

¹ John xiv. 28.² John x. 30.

viously right, and so strong an evidence is afforded that it was the very system ordained from the first by the Apostles, that to depart from it argues a most sinful presumptuousness. When we know from the universal tradition of Church history that a thing has been practised from the beginning—as, to name another instance, the observance of the Lord's day as a weekly festival, or the practice of infant baptism,—we conclude that it received the Apostles' sanction."

Mr. L. "I see from these instances, that some traditions are most valuable; and though not of the same absolute authority as the word of God, yet that the probability of their indicating God's will is so great, that it must be very sinful to reject them. What is the reason of all the disputes which have arisen in the present day about tradition?"

Mr. M. "Nothing more than this,—that wilful men chose to have their own way: one sect will not have bishops; another will not have infant baptism; another denies the Godhead of the Son; and so, because the universal tradition of the Church condemns them, they cry out that tradition is of no value, and then proceed to explain away the texts of Scripture which make against them, declaring that they have as much right to judge of the sense of Scripture as the Church universal. It is of no avail to tell these persons, or even to prove to them, that the Church has always held a certain doctrine, and adopted a certain practice; and to shew them that such doc-

trine or practice is borne out by Scripture. They prefer their own judgment, and so become schismatics."

Mr. L. "But there are few in the present day who actually leave the Church, in comparison with those who have been bred and born in schism. Your explanation seems to refer to the former only, or at least principally."

Mr. M. "It does so. The case of those who are bred and born in schism is different. The truth is, that these men live in a tradition of their own sect; they suffer for the sins of their fathers; they are schismatics by birth; they have got, as it were, into a wrong track, and have not the leisure or inclination to retrace their steps. But here we revert to our former position, *that there are bad traditions, which we ought to leave; and good, which we ought to follow.* It is the duty of these men, as it is the duty of all Christians, to ascertain, when they have the means, whether the faith in which they have been nurtured is the true faith of the Church of Christ. While they are children, we trust that, though labouring under disadvantage, they incur no actual sin. The Jewish child was not responsible for the evil tradition in which he was nurtured; but when he came to man's estate, he became responsible; for the Scripture, and various other sources of information, were open to him, whereby he might have tested whether the tradition was or was not good. So I conceive it to be the duty of every man to be ready to give a reason for the

faith which is in him. The Socinian should inquire whether his interpretation of Scripture is that which was held from the beginning; and he will find on inquiry, that, at the Council of Nice, his doctrine was condemned by the universal Church. The dissenter is bound to ascertain whether his discipline is according to the tradition of the Church; and he will find, that for 1500 years no such discipline was heard of. The Romanist, in like manner, will find that many of his doctrines and practices are of comparatively recent origin, and unknown to the ancient Church, as they are repugnant to the word of God.

“ You are, I trust, now prepared to acknowledge the value of tradition. If men take the Bible alone, it is evident, from experience, that they will fall into most pernicious errors: for this simple reason, that they will not interpret it aright. If they are content to receive the tradition in which they have been born, they are still liable to error. The children of Socinians are bred and born in the false tradition of Socinus; Wesleyans in the tradition of Wesley; Papists in the tradition of popery. All these, more or less, make the law and the gospel of none effect through their human tradition. But let them go by the tradition of the Church; let them receive those great truths which have been held from the beginning as the true interpretation of Scripture, and that form of discipline which the universal Church, for a long course of centuries, has upheld; let them reject the novelties of Popery, and the still more recent novel-

ties of Dissent, all of which can be proved to have sprung up in comparatively modern days, and there is a chance of the Church being once more united in one. At all events, individuals so acting have the surest hope of attaining truth."

This conversation with Mr. Manwaring quite satisfied me. It proved the great value and importance of tradition in enabling us to know the true will of God. It pointed out a safe and sure path; while, at the same time, it did not in the slightest degree trench on the paramount authority of Scripture as the standard of faith.



Oft have I seen, ere time had ploughed my cheek,
Matrons and sires, who, punctual to the call
Of their loved Church, on fast and festival,
Through the long year the house of prayer would seek.

Is ancient piety for ever flown ?
Alas ! even then they seemed like fleecy clouds,
That, struggling through the western sky, have won
Their pensive light from a departing sun.

WORDSWORTH.



CHAPTER XI.

Value of Church Ordinances.

Mr. L. "The account which you give of tradition," I continued, "does not appear to include those spoken of in the 39th Article, where we read—'It is not necessary that *traditions* and ceremonies be in all places one and utterly like; for in all places they have been diverse, and may be changed according to the diversities of countries, times, and new manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word.' The word 'tradition' seems here scarcely to have the same meaning as that to which we have adverted."

Mr. M. "Perhaps another word would have been more suitable. Yet I think it will fall under the head of *things handed down* from those before us. Each person finds himself a member of a Church in which certain usages and customs are observed, having been handed down from generations before him, and therefore called tradition; but being ordained by man's authority, and not having either the authority of Scripture, or the consent of the Church universal, they are

liable to be changed by the same authority by which they were instituted.

“For instance, in the case of baptism, the sacrament itself is strictly enjoined in Scripture ; the matter with which a child is to be baptised, and the form of words to be used, are both ordained ; these things, therefore, may not be varied. But while the essentials are retained, the details of the ordinance may be conducted according to the injunction of each particular Church, regard being had to the circumstances of time and place. The Eastern Churches used to practise immersion of the whole body in water ; but on account of the danger to which the child would sometimes be exposed in these northern climates, our Church has declared that sprinkling with water may also be used. The Roman Catholics put salt into the mouths of the children when they baptised them ; but in our Church the custom is different. Marriage, again, has always been considered in the Church as a religious ceremony, and to make it otherwise is highly irreverent and sinful ; but the use of the ring, or the custom of placing it on the fourth finger of the left hand, may be varied without impropriety, as different Churches shall direct.”

Mr. L. “Unless indeed there be, as some affirm, a peculiar nerve which runs from that finger to the heart. This, however, is, I fear, one of those oral traditions, of uncertain origin, on which great reliance cannot be placed.”

Mr. M. “Though each Church has authority to

ordain such rites and ceremonies as are not contrary to God's word, yet there is another qualification added in our Article ; namely, that they be such as tend to edifying. Before the Reformation the rites and ceremonies of the English Church were in many instances positively idolatrous, and contrary to God's word. These, therefore, were at once abolished. Others, were ' of godly intent and purpose devised, and yet at length had been turned to vanity and superstition.' These, therefore, were judiciously discontinued by our reformers. The reason why some ceremonies are retained and some abolished, is plainly set forth at the beginning of the Common Prayer. The book itself, as we now have it, contains what was considered by our reformers to be a suitable form of worship for the service of Almighty God. And though, of course, objection will be made by captious men to every thing, and some may like more of ceremony and some less, yet no essential objection can be proved against it. This book, therefore, contains the tradition to which, as peaceable members of the Church, we are bound to conform."

Mr. L. " Yet there are some ceremonies ordained in the Prayer-book which have fallen very much into disuse. Indeed it would appear a great innovation in some parishes, if the clergymen were to do every thing strictly according to the rubric."

Mr. M. " The more the pity. It has been unfortunately the constant tendency, especially since the Revolution, to depart more and more from the

ordinances of the Church, under the plea that the times have changed.

“To give you an instance, which the day suggests—the observance of the festivals. In how small a proportion of parishes are these maintained; yet how unquestionably are they ordered, and how obviously are they most valuable to fix the mind on heavenly things! I was in London not long ago, and went on one of the festivals to the parish-church. It was closed. However, I rejoiced to hear the sound of bells ringing merrily at a short distance, and bent my steps thither. There were two persons in the church besides myself; and one was, I shudder to say it, a drunken woman. A policeman was sent for to remove this wretched being, which he did with some difficulty; and then the clerk came and informed me very civilly that there was no congregation!”

Mr. L. “What a shocking fact! I will not ask you where it took place. I imagined, that in populous parishes the festivals had been more generally observed. In small rural districts, it might be difficult to get a congregation together.”

Mr. M. “The fault lies as often with the clergyman as with the congregation. The people are generally found ready to come, if urged to do so; at least, a sufficient number may be collected amongst the more serious. The other day I was talking to a Dissenter; and amongst other objections which he made to our Church, he declared that it *starved* its

members. I had no answer to make to this statement, except that the Church ordered prayers to be made daily ; but I could not deny that she was to blame for not enforcing her rules."

Mr. L. " The obligation of clergymen to open their churches on the festivals at least, seems unquestionable. I had made up my mind, when I saw your congregation this morning pouring from the church-door, that it was my duty to endeavour to restore the observance of the festivals at Somerton ; and what you have said has confirmed my resolution."

Mr. M. " Depend upon it, we cannot too closely conform to the direction of the Church. Nothing can be so preposterous as the custom of the present day to preach against ordinances, when they are so lamentably neglected. It almost looks as if clergymen wished to drive away their congregation on the festivals, in order that they may not have the trouble of performing the service. And then to enlarge on spiritual worship, as if the two were adverse, or incompatible one with the other ; whereas the express object of Christian ordinances is to raise the soul to spiritual things. For what do we commemorate the deeds of saints and martyrs, but that, by the contemplation of their zeal, and faith, and holiness, a spirit of emulation may be kindled in our own dull souls ? For what do we follow the steps of our blessed Saviour and the prophets and apostles, in frequent fasting and prayer, but that we may inure our souls to self-denial, and raise them above the

carnal vanities of life? Have the Christians of the nineteenth century any right to think that they can safely dispense with aids to devotion which the holiest of men in all ages have employed? I am convinced," continued Mr. Manwaring, rising from his seat, and speaking with more than usual energy, "I am convinced that *our people are perishing by thousands, from the neglect of the means of godliness prepared for them in the Church.* This is the grand stumbling-block of the Evangelicals, and is the cause of the comparatively small effect of their exertions upon the masses of the people. Much as I respect the zeal with which they have brought forward many vital and peculiar doctrines, I must freely say, that, practically, they have entirely failed in accomplishing any great amount of good. Their work is hollow and unsubstantial, and will not endure the fiery trial. Look at many a parish where evangelical doctrines have prevailed; and what do you behold? You shall see a large congregation on the Sundays listening to a popular preacher; but during the rest of the week, ungodliness and worldliness abound as much as elsewhere. The only break in the six intervening days is when the popular minister thinks fit to excite his admirers by a Thursday lecture or a missionary meeting; but of the daily influence of religion there is little or no symptom. Religion with them is a mere hebdomadal excitement: not, as in the ancient days, the paramount and prevailing object of life, noiselessly and quietly persevered in. Instead of conduct-

ing his flock in their daily devotions, an evangelical clergyman is too often a mere rival and candidate for popularity with the dissenting preachers. If he can outpreach them, it is well,—at least, his church is filled, and the establishment flourishes. But I grieve to say, that I fear the spiritual condition of his flock, even of those most diligent in attendance upon his preaching, is any thing but satisfactory. They are hearers, but not doers of the word. The very doctrine which they hear, of justification by faith only, apart from the equally vital doctrine, of reward according to works, involves them in an atmosphere of antinomianism, of which neither they nor their teachers are aware. It is all very well—nay, it is most necessary—to guard against the Romanist errors of dwelling too much on observances and works, or considering them as *meritorious*. But your modern evangelicals are plunged in the opposite error, of supposing, or so preaching that their hearers are led to suppose, that they can be saved by faith without a life of holiness. I admit in the fullest degree the necessity and efficacy of faith; still it is not by crying out, *believe, believe*, or harping for ever on the doctrine of justification by faith only, that we shall win souls; but it is by shewing them *how they shall get faith, and how they shall keep it*. Faith is a tender plant, which grows up only with careful nurture. It is not called forth by indolently listening to sermons, or critically judging of the preacher's doctrine: but by labouring dili-

gently day and night ; by keeping down all sinful thoughts and desires ; by much self-denial ; by contemplating the life and death of Jesus as set forth in the services of the Church ; by meditating on the deeds of holy men of old ; by devout participation in the ordinances and sacraments of the Church, which were mercifully prepared by our heavenly Father for this very purpose. It is thus that a clergyman must strive to kindle in the hearts of his people the implanted spark of faith and godliness, and when kindled to keep it alive. It is not your mere eloquent preacher who will lead his flock in the paths of righteousness ; but it is the laborious priest, who devotes himself to the sanctuary, who sets an example of daily godliness, who makes much of the worship of God, who is found in his place always at the appointed time. While the people in our towns look on the minister of the Church as a mere rival of the Dissenters, they will attend his preaching as long as he beats his competitors in elocution, and excites them more than the other ; but when he fails to do that, they will straightway go to the Dissenter, and derive as much benefit from one as the other. But let them hear their parochial minister speak, and let them see him act, as one to whom God has given His commission to administer His word and sacraments, and lead their continual worship ; let them learn to view the church as a place in which the contrite penitent may meet his God, offer up his humble prayer, and receive

his absolution; let them be led on through that holy round of ceremonies which the Church has wisely devised for sustaining the faith of her sons; let them learn to look on the church as God's tabernacle on earth, the place where His honour dwelleth, and where He listens to the prayers of His penitent and the faithful, and dispenses His blessings and graces; let the steward of God's mysteries impress high thoughts and holy aspirations like these on the hearts of his people, and our parishes would indeed be in a very different state from that in which we now behold them. I am convinced that this is the only way of doing our duty to God, and those whom He has committed to us, by weaning them from the inadequate, shallow, excited system of ultra-Protestantism, and leading them in the quiet pasture and beside the cooling stream of the Church."

Mr. Manwaring spoke with an earnestness and force which would have convinced one less disposed to be persuaded than myself. He was one of those rare and happy persons whose Christian spirit is so manifest in every look and word as to infuse itself into the hearts of those with whom they are brought into contact, and make them long that they could be of the same spirit. The hearts of others are rendered callous, and their speech cold, by inconsistencies of life, or party-views, or mixture with an evil world; but in the words and whole demeanour of my friend there was the irresistible evidence of godly sincerity and love.

"My dear sir," said I, grasping his hand, "I cannot tell you how much I am indebted to you for the sentiments and views which you have expressed. They have relieved me of a great weight. I begin at last to see my way. Some hope is opened to me of doing good to my flock. I shall think very much of these subjects; and permit me, before I take leave of you, to express a hope that I may again enjoy the benefit of your advice and conversation; nay, I trust I shall be able to induce you to pay me a visit in my own parish."

Mr. Manwaring assured me that he should not fail (God willing) to return my visit; and we parted with mutual assurances of good will.

As I rode home my mind was so full of deep thought and intense emotion, that I scarce heeded how I went. Sometimes I suffered my horse to walk at a foot-pace through the quiet lanes; at other times the eagerness of my spirit seemed to communicate itself to the animal on which I rode, and, as it were by the mere impulse of my mind, he sprang forth at his swiftest pace over the greensward of the common. I had reached the gate of my parsonage, and was seated in my study, almost unconscious of the interval which had elapsed.

After the excitement of my mind had subsided, I began to consider that the work before me must be the result not of a mere sudden impulse, but of long and persevering energy. Though an occasional warmth and ardour is wholesome, yet toil, and pati-

ence, and prayer, are the more effectual instruments. The first practical improvement which appeared desirable, by way of a beginning upon my new system, was that on which my friend and I had principally conversed—the observance of the fasts and festivals of the Church. Whether my rector would consider it an unwarrantable innovation I knew not; at any rate, I thought it my duty to write to him on the subject; and in due course I received the following answer:—

“MY DEAR SIR,

“To a young and ardent minister, so much disposed, as you are, to do his duty conscientiously, it must, I am aware, be very mortifying to be checked in any favourite scheme, by which it appears to him that the good of his parish may be promoted. It was this feeling which caused me much pain when I felt it my duty to request you to discontinue the Thursday lectures in the school-house; and I felt thankful that you so readily submitted to my wishes. Your proposal with regard to the revival of the Church festivals, appears to me to stand altogether on a different footing. The school-room lecture involved a departure from the spirit, and, as I conceive, the letter of Church discipline. The revival of the festivals is strictly according to both. I am happy therefore to give my cordial concurrence to your proposal; and only take shame to myself for having so long suffered the ordinances of the Church, in this respect, to be as it were in abeyance in my parish. The only excuse which I can plead, is the prevailing laxity of the age, and the remissness on such

matters into which, in conjunction with a large portion of my brethren, I had unhappily fallen. That God may prosper you in your labours, and revive the spirit of His Church, is the sincere prayer of

“Your faithful friend and brother,

• JOHN ALWORTHY.”

This letter was no less unexpected than it was satisfactory. It appeared to me as if the hand of God was manifest in the affair, and that He was simultaneously stirring up the hearts of His servants. I perceived at once that my rector had caught the spirit of the movement, and though, from his advanced age and moderate principles, not likely to become an enthusiast, was disposed to throw no obstacle in the way of Church restoration. The very next Sunday I astonished my congregation by giving notice, at the appointed time, after the Nicene Creed, that the following Tuesday, being the Festival of Saint James the Apostle, was appointed to be kept holy, and that the church would be open for divine service; and afterwards took the opportunity of stating from the pulpit the reason which had induced me, in concurrence with the wishes of my rector, to make what to some might appear an innovation, but which was, in reality, the restoration of a custom quite common in the days of our Protestant forefathers, though of late it had fallen into neglect. I pointed out how valuable a means of grace it was; how obviously the contemplation of the deeds of holy men, of whom the world was not worthy, was

calculated to increase our faith and advance our holiness; and I prayed God to forgive our past neglect, and give His blessing to our undertakings.

It was not to be expected, after the disuse of two generations at least, that the attendance at public worship on the festivals should at once become general. Still I had the gratification of soon numbering thirty or forty very regular attendants.

The success of this measure induced me to consider the revival of the daily prayers. I wrote to my rector, and in answer received his permission to begin them on the Wednesdays and Fridays. This, perhaps, was judicious; at any rate, it was cautious. Persons long disused to meet to pray more than once in the week—accustomed to look upon the sermon as the most important part of the service—are not easily induced to come to church when there are only prayers. To bring them back to a holier frame of mind must be the work of years, perhaps of generations.

I began now to hope that I had discovered the secret of which I had been so long in search; namely, *how to make my flock more godly*. To accomplish any object, you must use the proper means. The means of obtaining faith and godliness are those which the Church prescribes. I felt persuaded that in order to make sure of being members of the Church triumphant in heaven, it was necessary that they should be consistent members of the Church militant upon earth. Conversion in middle life, and

death-bed repentance, were exceptions to the general rule. A holy life, built on faith—a consistent course of godly living, from baptism to the grave—is the only sure passport to heaven; and the nearer each man conforms to this, the greater is his hope of salvation.



Nor yet,
(Grave this within thy heart !) if spiritual things
Be lost, through apathy, or scorn, or fear,
Shalt thou thy humbler franchises support,
However hardly won or justly dear.

WORDSWORTH.



CHAPTER XII.

Why let not well alone?

It is of the greatest importance in a parish to have the principal residents religious and well disposed. There are amongst our English gentry many bright examples of truly religious men and devoted members of the Church, who gladly co-operate with the clergyman in all his exertions for the benefit of his flock, of which they do not disdain to consider themselves as humble members. Others there are who, without these high and holy motives, still are, as they term it, *supporters* of the Church and friends of the clergy. They know full well that the precept and example of a zealous clergyman are of inestimable value to preserve good order amongst their tenants and labourers; and duly appreciate the influence which they have in keeping the lower classes sober and honest, instead of being drunkards and poachers.

From conservative principles such as these,

many English gentlemen extend their aid to the parochial clergyman so long as he does not interfere with their comforts or habits, and provided he keeps to the accustomed routine. But if he goes beyond the beaten track, and introduces any seeming novelties, or advocates unusual strictness, then the jealousy of the squire is rather apt to be excited ; for he is no great theologian, and is little able to judge whether the apparent novelties be judicious or otherwise. He sees only that the old beaten track is departed from, and at once sets down the deviation as a novelty. The evangelical clergy used to be objects of great jealousy to the English gentry ; but now their zeal has ceased to cause opposition, and the doctrines of evangelism are so prevalent, at least in a modified form, in most parishes, that any marked departure from them is viewed as an innovation.

I was fortunate in having a very worthy gentleman, of the good old English sort, as the principal resident in my parish. Sir John Somerville, a baronet of good family and fortune, was the owner of a fine mansion and the greater part of the property in Somerton. He had been member for the county in several parliaments, which of course took him a good deal to London ; but the rest of his time he spent usually at his country-seat. His family consisted of his lady—a very exemplary and right-principled gentlewoman ; a son, who was at Oxford ; and two daughters, Martha and Agnes. These young ladies

were well brought up by their mother, and taught to interest themselves in the welfare of their poorer neighbours. Yet there was a considerable difference in their character. Martha was more active and bustling than her sister. She was indefatigable in teaching her class in the Sunday-school; and might be often seen hasting through the village with baskets of provisions, or bundles of linen, for sick persons. Though well intentioned, she was rather deficient in judgment; and it is related of her, that once, when she went to pay a visit to the fasting-woman at Tutbury, she took a basket containing a good supply of calves-foot jelly and other delicacies for the invalid. On the whole, she was not so much liked as her sister, being fond of managing and giving directions, and without that delicacy of feeling and kind sympathy for those whom she befriended, which is so sure to win their affection. Agnes, on the other hand, was kindness itself. Every one loved Agnes. The countenance of the suffering patient was lighted up with a glad smile at her approach: age forgot its infirmities, and disease its sorrows, when she was present. Another difference between her and her sister was, that Martha was always wanting little alterations made in the parochial arrangements, and made a great fuss about trifles. Agnes went on calmly and quietly in her path of duty, intent mainly on the one thing needful.

One morning I received a visit from Sir John, which was no unusual occurrence, as he took great

interest in the poor, and often consulted me about them.

"I am anxious," he said, "to know what you think about poor Carter. I fear his leg will never be thoroughly restored, unless he is put under the regular and constant attendance of a first-rate surgeon. Do you not think we had better send him to the Infirmary?"

"Certainly: he will have the best chance of being perfectly cured if he is sent there."

"Well, I have got a ticket for him; and will tell William to drive him over to Ashford in the covered cart with springs. We must put a good feather-bed in for him to lie on. By the by, do you think he is properly supplied with linen?"

"I fear not, Sir John. His wife is but an untidy person, and does not keep him very comfortable."

"Well, well; I will speak to Lady Somerville. We must see him properly fitted out."

Here a pause ensued; and I fancied from Sir John's manner that poor Carter's accident was not the only object of his visit. However, having no clue to the thoughts of my worthy parishioner, I considered it better to remain silent, in order to give him an opportunity of saying what he wished. At last Sir John, of his own accord, broached the subject.

"I am anxious, Mr. Leslie, to speak a word with you on a subject with regard to which I should scarcely feel myself justified in addressing you, were

it not that I trust we are on such terms of intimacy and friendship as to warrant me in taking the liberty."

There was a good deal more of formality in this speech than Sir John usually exhibited, as he was generally plain spoken, and employed very little circumlocution.

I assured him that I should at all times be most ready to converse with him, or any other parishioner, on subjects connected with my office : only, of course, reserving to myself the privilege of acting as, after mature deliberation, I considered most accordant with my duty.

"I beg you will not think that I would presume to dictate—I am no theologian, Mr. Leslie ; but still, in the course of reading and conversation, one hears these subjects discussed. Even the columns of newspapers are filled with religious controversy, which, in my humble opinion, had much better be omitted."

I quite agreed with my worthy friend in his view so far.

"I am told," continued Sir John, "that there is a new school of theologians recently sprung up at Oxford, who have put forth a series of publications called *Tracts for the Times*. Have you seen any of these Tracts, Mr. Leslie?"

"I have, Sir John ; I know the contents of them pretty well ; and so, indeed, do you."

"Nay, I never read one of them, to my knowledge."

“ You have *heard* them though, at least the greater part of them ; for I have for the last several months, from time to time, introduced considerable portions of the matter contained in them into my sermons.”

“ Ah, indeed ! well I perceived that you touched on subjects which seemed to have some novelty. And I must say, that the points on which you have lately dwelt have appeared to me very important. But I have heard from several quarters—indeed, my eldest daughter has had several letters from ladies of her acquaintance on the subject ; and it is very generally asserted that the doctrines in question, if not actually popish, have a direct tendency that way.”

I assured my worthy friend, that had such been the case, I should have been the last man on earth to bring them forward. No one was more averse than I was to the corruption and superstition of popery—especially after what I had witnessed on the Continent, and heard of the proceedings of the Papists in Ireland ; no one was more anxious to keep, both in letter and spirit, to the doctrine and practices of our own reformed Church.

After that, we had a long conversation on the different points on which I had recently preached : the unity and visibility of the Church, the apostolical succession, the divine institution of the episcopate, the high value of the sacraments, the necessity of adhering to the ordinances of the Church to which we professed to belong. I shewed my excellent

and intelligent parishioner proofs in Scripture of the doctrines in question; and then pointed out that whatever I had preached, and whatever deviation I had made from the usual order of the service, was strictly in conformity with the book of Common Prayer, according to which I was bound to act.

“ Well,” said Sir John, after a very patient attention to all I had to bring forward, “ I must acknowledge that your views are entirely in accordance with the formularies of our Church; and if the doctrines and usages which you advocate are popish, all I can say is, that our Prayer-book is popish. I think Martha and her friends must have made some mistake. Still, you will allow me, I am sure, to speak freely. It does not appear to me what is the advantage of making alterations in ordinary customs, even supposing them not strictly correct, or indeed to be a variation from the precise letter of the rubric. Why should you read the Athanasian Creed, for instance, which seems generally to have sunk into disuse? and what does it signify *when* the bread and wine are placed on the altar? It may be perfectly true that you are following the rubric; but are you not unnecessarily scrupulous? Times have changed, and customs change with them. Why not go on as we are? Why not let well alone? The Church has shewn itself rooted in the affections of the people, and able to resist the combined forces of the papists and dissenters. Is there not danger in these alterations, lest you should

alienate the people from the Established Church, which is, as I thankfully allow, so great a blessing to the country?"

To give a proper answer to these questions required some effort and consideration. However, I was glad to avail myself of the occasion, and accordingly endeavoured to collect my ideas, and place them in the plainest point of view; for though Sir John was an intelligent and well-educated man, yet it is wonderful to observe with what difficulty even such men, especially if they have mixed much with the world, are able to enter into the real importance of a religious argument. On high and holy principles of religion, and the true notion of God's spiritual kingdom, perhaps no man is so little able to judge correctly as the mere statesman or man of business, especially if he be of an utilitarian turn. He may be of high talent and honest purpose, still his business is to care for the temporal prosperity of men; to regulate, it may be, the affairs of nations; or to do good in the station in which he is placed. Consequently, he is apt to regard the Church only so far as it conduces to these objects, to which, in truth, it does mainly conduce, though that is not its highest value. He avails himself of its aid where it is palpably useful, but has no notion of the infinite benefit both temporal and eternal which would result to nations and individuals, if the system of the Church were carried out as its Divine Head wills it should be. Hence such men have commonly low views of religion,

looking to the political establishment only, and not the kingdom of God. Not but that, in spite of these disadvantages, they may be good Christians, if they be humble and sincere ; for God has furnished ample means whereby the faith of all men may be sustained. The statesman, though seldom one who enters with enthusiasm into the high destinies of the Church, may be a zealous and an important agent in doing the Lord's work. Nor should he who thinks he has higher and nobler views speak or think slightly of the man of this world, if only he be sincere ; but rather endeavour to enlist in the service of God those commanding talents, which without a higher impulse may be too exclusively devoted to the mere pursuits of earth.

But to return to my narrative.

“ My dear Sir John, the question which you have now proposed will require that I should enter somewhat discursively into the general state of the Church in this nation, and inquire with some closeness what is her real condition. You naturally view the Church with the eye of a politician. Considering her as the greatest blessing to the country, you have perhaps trembled for her safety, and are now rejoiced at the symptoms of strength which she exhibits, and the enthusiasm which in many quarters is raised in her favour ; you set them down as proofs of her popularity and efficiency. Even in this point of view, however, I think the writers of the Tracts for the Times have done good service. When they were first

commenced, the Church was in a very low state indeed. Her bishoprics in Ireland were suppressed ; church-rates were refused in many parishes ; and serious fears were entertained for the safety of the establishment. For myself, I verily believe that the great change of feeling, and the present security which we enjoy, is in a great measure attributable to the enthusiastic spirit which these very writings have kindled."

I then adverted to certain proceedings which had taken place at Oxford, partaking of a political and religious character, which had been the first serious check to the current of liberalism, and had taught the enemies of the Church, that she was not to be trampled on. These circumstances need not now be repeated. They proved, however, that the Tract-writers had done good service even in a political view.

"But," I continued, "one occupying the place which I do, as minister of the Gospel, is naturally led to look more closely at the state of the Church ; not in its political capacity, but with a view to discover how far she is accomplishing her great work of winning souls to Christ, and uniting them in one holy communion.

"When first I came to this parish, I remember that all seemed fair and flourishing to outward view, and I thought that any one might have pointed to Somerton as a specimen of what an English parish should be. But on looking beneath the surface, I

have found bitter cause to distrust appearances. There is not only much positive immorality, but, I fear, still more secret ungodliness. However, I will not enlarge on the faults of my neighbours; I would rather take my instances from other places. Look at the condition of any populous town,—and can it be said that the Church is in a right state? What division! what schism! what open ungodliness! Then consider the awful destitution of religious instruction and ordinances; and, notwithstanding the pages written and speeches made on the subject, still the niggardliness with which provision is made to remedy the acknowledged deficiency. One would have thought that, when the destitution of the people was plainly proved, all parties in the state would have vied with each other in their efforts to remove the evil. But any great and important change seems, alas! almost as far distant as ever. The very repetition of complaints seems to have hardened men's hearts against these crying evils. I think, therefore, that, though a certain degree of popularity may have been gained by the Church,—so that, politically speaking, she is in a safe condition,—yet that her real state is very far from being so satisfactory, that it can be said no alteration is needed. Nay, I should rather say that her actual condition is a proof that the popular Churchmanship of the present day is practically a failure. Do I, in affirming this, bring a charge of inefficiency against the English Church? No; far from it. On the contrary, I say, *restore her to what*

she really is, to what the reformers left her, and she will be the most effectual instrument to save the nation from corruption and ruin. Preach to the people her forgotten doctrines, and there will at least be hope that they will be recognised. Tell them of the unity so distinctly enjoined in Scripture, and they may be induced to give up their schism. Urge upon them the Divine claim of their ministers, and they may yet be willing to rally round them, and respect them as God's ambassadors. Teach them the nature of the Church's festivals, and they will discern their value, and regard them as they ought. Induce them to keep the appointed fasts, and you may ingraft in them a spirit of self-denial for the Lord's sake, which will be the best antidote against the prevailing luxury and self-indulgence, and may furnish the means of restoring the Church to her efficiency.

“It is really surprising that men should not discern the obvious connexion between the neglect of Church-ordinances and the prevailing evils of the day, and acknowledge how surely their revival would be the best antidote. What is it that prevents churches being built, schools founded, and the people educated and instructed in the ways of truth? What but the selfish niggardliness of those in the upper and middle classes, who will not exercise the self-denial necessary to supply the requisite means, but must have their equipages and entertainments, and vie with each other in splendour and refinement, while the poor are perishing for lack of labourers in

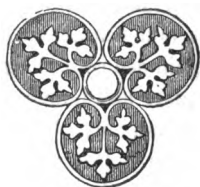
this vineyard ? How is this state of things to be remedied ? If men were but taught to exercise, for conscience-sake, the self-denial necessary for observing the Church's fasts, I warrant they would soon control their inordinate expenses, and supply the wants of their poorer brethren. When a rich man has learned to fast for duty's sake, he will then be disposed to sacrifice other luxuries and comforts, which now he looks on as almost necessities. So, again, induce him to observe the festivals of the Church with religious veneration ; and not only will his soul be improved by the contemplation of the character of Christians of former days, but he will learn to take delight in holy ordinances, the worship of God will become habitual with him, a train of analogous feelings and sentiments will be imbibed, and we may yet again see something of the devotion, the humility, the piety and munificence, of our forefathers. I am afraid, my dear sir, I may have spoken somewhat too boldly and plainly ; and you will set me down as an enthusiast. However, I trust you will bestow your candid consideration on the facts and arguments to which I have adverted."

"I promise you I will, Mr. Leslie," said my worthy friend, rising and shaking my hand : "sentiments like those which you have uttered are too valuable to be neglected. Some, I confess, are novel to me. But it is impossible not to discern their importance. I came here thinking to give you a word of advice ;

P

but I see that in these matters at least I have a good deal to learn from you."

From that time Sir John and I became greater friends than ever ; and his countenance and example were of the greatest value in my plans of reformation.



Why mourn'st thou still as one bereft,
Now that the eternal Son
His blessed home in heaven hath left,
To make thee all His own ?

Thou mourn'st because sin lingers still
In Christ's new heaven and earth,—
Because our rebel thoughts and will
Stain our immortal birth.

KEBLE.



CHAPTER XIII.

Solemn Practical Thoughts.

THE conversation which I had had with my worthy parishioner led me into a train of reflections, all tending to the great question which for so long had occupied my mind: namely, how to bring my parishioners to repentance and holy living. And the more I pondered on the question, and ran over in my mind all that had been said on a former occasion by Mr. Manwaring, the more convinced was I that, as the Church was the instrument whereby the seed of life was first conveyed by baptismal regeneration; and, as by her ordinances she is the means of keeping alive in the heart, and quickening, the spark of divine grace,—so *also*, in the case of those in which the grace of baptism has been corrupted or lost, the ordinances of the Church are the surest means of *restoration*.

Of the efficacy of *preaching*, in many cases, to awaken the sinner to a sense of his danger, and so bring him to repentance and amendment of life, none entertain a doubt. But there are other ordinances of the Church not less efficacious, and often available, in cases where preaching may have

been ineffectual. I reflected on the case — alas, too common! — of a man living in all the comforts and luxuries of life; endowed with ample, or at least sufficient, means; ignorant of want and poverty, perhaps of sickness; and yet feeling that his heart is not right with God: God is not in all his thoughts. If he thinks on death and judgment, heaven and hell, it is with an uncomfortable fear. Instead of rejoicing to be called away to the presence of God, he would shudder at the very thought. And yet this man is no stranger to the word of truth. He comes, it may be, every Sunday, and hears very solemn appeals on the necessity of repentance, the fearful danger of sin, and the great love of God in sending His beloved Son to die for perishing sinners; yet these things move him not. They have little or no effect upon him; less each time he hears them. And the more awakening and stimulating is the appeal of the preacher, so much the more, by its constant repetition, does it deaden and blunt his feelings.

Does the Church, then, leave this man to his fate? Is there no ordinance besides preaching, to which he can resort? The more I thought on the case of the prosperous, well-doing, unrepentant sinner, the more was I convinced that nothing could be more exactly suitable, or more mercifully prepared by the providence of God, than the *ordinance of fasting*. This man's soul is being destroyed by his comforts, his self-indulgence, his prosperity; his mind is set on what he shall eat or drink, and where-

withal he shall be clothed — how he shall rest most comfortably — how he shall furnish his house most respectably, and enjoy the society of his friends and neighbours, and have his pleasures and amusements, and make his bargains, and be well thought of, — and how he shall bring up his children, that they also shall have their comforts, and do well. But every now and then he feels that this cannot last for ever; and then he thinks what will be the end of these things; and he wishes that he could turn to God, and love Him, and fear Him, as he ought to do, and obtain pardon for his past ungodliness.

To a man so circumstanced, can we conceive a means of grace more suitable than that he should, at the Church's bidding, devote certain days to self-abasement for religion's sake; that he should practise fasting or abstinence from his ordinary abundance; that he should forego the festive circle, or curtail his hours of sleep, or, in short, in some way *deny himself*, so as to make, as it were, *a beginning of repentance*?

The sermons which he has heard may have touched his conscience, but they have not brought him to repentance. He has not even made a beginning. Well, then, let him try some other means. Let him try those means which David, and Daniel, and other holy men have tried, in order to bring their souls more closely to God,—those means the efficacy of which has been attested by the experience of the Church of all ages, and which are dis-

tinctly provided by the Church of which he is a member ;— *let him try fasting.*

But suppose another case : the case of him whose hours, and days and nights, are occupied by the business of the world ; the statesman, it may be, on whom rests the responsibility of many weighty matters ; the professional man, whose duty is to attend to the interests of his clients, or administer to the health of his patients ; or the tradesman, whose occupation is to buy and sell ; or the parent, who is sore pressed with the cares of his family. These too feel their need of repentance and turning to God. They are aware that their hearts are too much occupied by the cares of life. The present scene, and the various actors in it, are to them all in all. And yet they are conscious, when they think of it, that this world is but a poor limited sphere ; they feel within them capabilities for higher things— aspirations after better objects. Each Sunday, in God's house, they express their belief in the " communion of saints ;" and they doubt not that it is something real ; that there are saints departed, yet as truly living as when here on earth ; yes, that there are spirits here on earth, with whom it were good for them to hold communion. But they are conscious that, in fact, they hold no communion save with those whom they meet day by day—men involved in the same pursuits and interests with themselves—men whom they converse with for mere worldly purposes of business or society.

What remedy could be devised more exactly suitable to this state of mind, than the observance of those holy festivals in which the Church, from time to time, calls to remembrance the memory of those great and good men of whom the world was not worthy, and holds them up to our contemplation and imitation; men who gave up all for Christ's sake, and served God in their lives, humbly and faithfully conforming themselves to the example of their Saviour, and doing the Lord's work upon earth? What could be conceived more effectual to tear our hearts from the all-engrossing present—to wean them from the poor affairs of this world—to separate them from exclusive communion with worldly, secular men, than thus, at the times appointed by the Church, to contemplate the lives and deaths of God's departed saints?

Again; I thought, how many are there who often feel sad misgivings that *their faith is not genuine*; who cannot realise in their hearts what their Saviour has done and suffered for them; who hear constantly from the pulpit admonitions that they ought to have faith in Christ, and love Him with all their heart and strength, and throw themselves entirely on Him, and that He should dwell in their hearts by faith; how many are there who constantly hear these things, and have no doubt that they are true, and yet are painfully aware that they have no such holy thoughts in their hearts, however much and anxiously they desire them!

What can be provided more exactly suitable to the case of such as these, than that regular system of devotion which the Church affords? First, the frequent participation in the holy eucharist; and next, the solemn observance of those holy seasons which commemorate the great events of our Saviour's life, and trace Him, so to speak, from the cradle to the grave: His advent, His nativity, His manifestation to the Gentiles, His temptation in the wilderness; the solemn concluding scenes of His life,—His last supper, His betrayal, His agony, His crucifixion, and then His glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven. What, thought I, can be imagined more effectual to break in upon the current of worldly thoughts and feelings, and accustom ourselves to the contemplation of spiritual things—and especially, to strengthen our faith in Christ, and enable us to realise in our souls all that He has done and suffered for us,—than the faithful and habitual recurrence to these holy ordinances; the setting aside our ordinary occupation, in order to observe them strictly, and forcing ourselves to engage in them, until we learn to do so with delight!

The grand error of the religion of the present day is, the notion that we can accomplish ends without the use of means. We are told to believe, and we shall be saved. Yes; but *how* is faith to be obtained, and cherished, and confirmed? That is the practical question. And if the trembling sinner, in alarm for his soul's health, and in the hope of

strengthening his faith or restoring his lost holiness, betakes himself to the ordinances of the Church—instead of being encouraged, as he ought to be, and told that they are the very means appointed by God to help his unbelief,—he is coldly warned that danger lurks in them; that he must take heed lest he trust in them instead of the merits and death of Christ;—and so he turns away disconsolably from the means of grace, and faith remains dead, and sin remains unchecked, yea, rather continues to increase daily in the tenacity of its hold.

The more I reflected on these deeply practical subjects, the more was my conviction strengthened that the true and efficacious means of bringing sinners to repentance, and promoting godliness amongst those committed to my charge, was to habituate them, if possible, to *a faithful and reasonable observance of the Church's ordinances*—not as in themselves meritorious, but as means to an end, aids to repentance, helps to faith.



**The spring of the regenerate heart,
The pulse, the glow of every part,
Is the true love of Christ our Lord,
As man embraced, as God adored.**
KEBLE.



CHAPTER XIV.

The Sacraments. Regeneration. Repentance. Justification. Imputed Righteousness. Reward according to Works.

ABOUT this time were published several Tracts entitled "Scriptural Views of Holy Baptism," in many respects the most important of the series. The former had called the attention of religious men to many neglected doctrines,—as the Apostolic succession, the unity and visibility of the Church, the true use of ordinances; but the present entered more deeply and fully into the real practical differences between the Church system and that of the sectarians. Of the convincing argument, the deep learning, the impressive sincerity, the pure charity, with which the Tracts on Baptism are written, it is impossible to speak in terms of too high praise. Difficult, indeed, it is to conceive how any sincere person can withstand the joint influence of these various appeals. To me the views exhibited appeared of the deepest importance.

The argument turns on the vital necessity and

efficacious influence of the sacraments, as means of salvation ordained by Christ. The problem which I had long endeavoured to solve, was, the true practical means of conveying the benefits of Christ's atonement to the souls of men. The present Tracts answered my inquiry, by pointing out the important place which the sacraments occupy for this purpose.

The main difference between the Church and the sectarians, as regards the sacraments, is this.—The whole Church for fifteen hundred years, and the great body of professing Christians even since that time—including the Romish and Greek Churches, the Lutherans, and the reformed English Church, with its dependencies in different parts of the world—all agree in considering the sacraments as the principal channels, appointed by God, for conveying Divine grace to the faithful. The Swiss reformer Zuingle, and after him Calvin, and certain sects which have since sprung up, consider the sacraments as mere outward signs or symbols. The formularies of our own Church, in conformity with the doctrine of the Church Catholic, teach that a sacrament is an outward visible sign of *an inward spiritual grace given unto us*, ordained by Christ Himself, as a means whereby we receive the same (*i. e.* the spiritual grace), and a pledge to assure us thereof. Thus, in the Lord's Supper, the outward sign is, "the bread and wine, which the Lord hath commanded to be received." The inward grace given to us is, "the body and blood of Christ,

which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." This doctrine the sectarians deny, and consider the Lord's Supper as nothing more than a memorial or representation of Christ's death, given to assist our faith, and not a communion of His blessed body and blood ; whereby in a mysterious way " we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us ; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us."

And so with regard to the other sacrament, on which the Tract principally dwells, the Church declares the inward grace given at baptism to be " a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness," —in one word, *regeneration* ; " for being by nature born in sin, the children of wrath, we are thereby (*i. e.* by baptism) made the children of grace." And in explaining to her children their position before God, she teaches them that they were made at baptism " children of God, members of Christ (*i. e.* one with Him, and He with them), and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." The sectarian utterly denies this doctrine of baptismal regeneration, held by the Church from the beginning, and considers it a popish error. The evangelical members of our own Church lean to the Zuinglian, or dissenting, view of the sacraments ; think that the expressions in various parts of our Liturgy are exceptionable when taken literally ; and seeing that they cannot remove them, they explain them away in a most unscrupulous manner. One English clergyman, if not more, has posi-

tively refused to use the baptismal service. Of the truth of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, I had long ago fully convinced myself, by a diligent comparison of our own formularies with holy Scripture. And it was gratifying to find in these Tracts the most ample confirmation of the doctrine from the writings of the fathers ; all of whom, with one consent, speak of it as an undoubted doctrine of the ancient Church. Still, I had not been aware before of the vast importance which it holds in the Christian scheme. I had received it in faith, without perceiving the full extent of its utility. It might be safely argued, that any scriptural doctrine, especially one so prominently insisted on by our Lord Himself, as that of baptismal regeneration, could not be disregarded or pushed out of its place, without a most grievous breach in the integrity of revealed truth. Still, I had not been at all aware of its essential practical importance. To say that any one doctrine is the cardinal point of the Christian scheme, is more than we are warranted in Scripture ; it may, however, be safely asserted that, in point of order at least, baptismal regeneration holds the first rank. It is, in fact, the starting-point of the Christian's course. It is the beginning of the life of God in his soul. It is the implanting in the heart the seed of Divine grace, thenceforth to be cherished and confirmed. It is the grafting the redeemed soul into the stock of Christ, in which, if he remain firm, he is assured of salvation.

This, then, appeared to me the straightforward and most hopeful course for the minister of the Gospel to pursue ; namely, to accept the lambs of Christ's flock, as it were, from Himself, and endeavour to train them up from the very beginning in the faith and fear of God ; to put parents continually in remembrance of the awful charge committed to them, and warn them to be very careful of their souls' health. And with regard to those who have fallen from their baptismal purity,—to remind such of the privileges which they have lost, their great ingratitude to their heavenly Father, and the imminent danger in which they had placed themselves.

The only part of the Tract which appeared to me doubtful, was the excessive difficulty which, from some expressions, the writer appeared to attach to repentance. Difficult, indeed, it is in a very great degree ; since to root out settled habits of sin is compared to cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye. But what is impossible to man, is possible with God. And it is fervently to be hoped that the grace of God may greatly smooth the way of the true penitent, especially in the case of that numerous class of persons who, by early association with evil, and partly through the Church's negligence, had never known their baptismal privileges and adoption into Christ's family ; and had been nurtured, without fault of their own, in sin and ungodliness. Such is probably the case of multi-

tudes in this Christian land : and of them we may surely hope that God will not impute to them the guilt of departure from the grace of baptism, in the same manner as He does to those who sin wilfully against light and grace ; but may in His own good time offer to their acceptance the gift of repentance, unobscured by that judicial blindness to which presumptuous sinners are condemned.

The adoption, therefore, of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as a leading feature in the Gospel, and as the primary object of ministerial regard, does not oblige us in the least to deny the doctrine of repentance or conversion ; but, on the contrary, furnishes arguments perhaps more cogent than any others which can be used, whereby the necessity of repentance may be enforced.

There was another point, however, for consideration, which afterwards arose in my mind, and with regard to which I took an opportunity of consulting Mr. Manwaring, in consequence of some objections which I had heard made against the Tracts on Baptism.

“ Does it appear to you,” I asked my friend, “ that the doctrine of regeneration, held plainly and unreservedly as it is set forth in the Baptismal Service, interferes with the doctrine of justification by faith ? ”

Mr. M. “ Not in the least ; every person who is saved is justified by faith, as well as regenerated by baptism.”

Mr. L. "I can see this distinctly enough in the case of adult persons who are baptised. Then faith and baptism are in a manner simultaneous, or nearly so. As we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that as soon as any believed, they were straightway baptised; especially in the case of St. Paul, to whom, as soon as he confessed his belief in Christ, Ananias said, 'And now, why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptised, and wash away thy sins;' thereby giving as it were, the finishing stroke to his acceptance. But how do you explain the justification of infants? they cannot actually have faith."

Mr. M. "And yet the Church distinctly bids us be assured that they are, according to God's word, 'undoubtedly saved;'¹ and therefore we may conclude that they are justified. Justification is the being acquitted, or considered just, before God; and when the birth-sin is washed away, and a new nature given them, as it is at baptism, then, having been guilty of no actual sin, they are in a state of acceptance—in one word, they are just before God."

Mr. L. "I suppose, then, you consider that the faith of their sponsors is accepted instead of their own?"

Mr. M. "There are difficulties in this view of the case: first, that the sponsors may themselves be unbelieving persons; secondly, that in the case of private baptism, where there are no sponsors, still the Church unhesitatingly thanks God that He has

¹ See the rubric at the end of the Baptismal Service.

regenerated the infant with His Holy Spirit—has received him for His own child by adoption, and made him partaker of the death of His Son—in short, has given him every thing.”

Mr. L. “Do you, then, attribute it to the faith of the Church?”

Mr. M. “Some consider *that* to be the true doctrine. I am, however, inclined to believe that it is the child’s own faith whereby he is justified.”

Mr. L. “How can that be?”

Mr. M. “I think it reasonable to suppose, that when God so graciously receives the child into the arms of His mercy, He gives him, at the same time, every thing which is necessary to complete the merciful work; and since justification is necessary to salvation, and since faith is necessary to justification, it would seem to follow, that God does then and there *implant the principle of faith in the child’s heart*,—not a ‘present actual *habit* of faith,’¹ but the ‘first foundation,’ whereupon the edifice is built in after-years;

¹ See Hooker, who follows St. Augustine, book v. lxiv.—“Touching which difficulty, whether it may truly be said for infants, at the time of their baptism, that they do believe, the effect of St. Augustine’s answer is, yea; but with this distinction:—a present actual habit of faith there is not in them; there is delivered unto them that sacrament, a part of the due celebration of which consisteth in answering to the articles of faith, because the habit of faith, which afterward doth come with years, is but a farther building up of the same edifice, *the first foundation of which was laid in the sacrament of baptism.*”

so that though, by reason of his tender years, he is not able to perform acts of faith (as his sponsors promise he shall do, if he comes to years of discretion), yet that nevertheless he does by the gift of God receive the gift or grace of faith; whereby, if he is spared in this world, he is capable, when his understanding opens, of receiving divine truth; or, on the other hand, if he be removed hence, still, by virtue of the grace of faith given him, he is received as a justified soul in the realms of light."

Mr. L. "Is there any authority in Scripture, or are there any passages in the formularies of the Church, which connect justification with baptism?"

Mr. M. "Yes; in the important passage on regeneration, which we read in the Epistle to Titus, it is written, 'After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, *by the washing of regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; *that, being justified by His grace*, we should be heirs according to the hope of eternal life.' This passage appears exactly to embrace the case of infants, who are justified by grace, and saved by the mercy of God, not for any works which they have done, but by the washing of regeneration."

Mr. L. "It seems exactly to apply."

Mr. M. "There are also several passages in the 'Homily of Salvation' which shew that the idea of

justification at baptism was quite familiar with our reformers. 'Although we hear God's word, and believe it; although we have faith, hope, charity, repentance, dread and fear of God within us, and do never so many good works thereunto, yet we must renounce the merit of all our said virtues, of faith, hope, charity, and all other virtues and good deeds, which we either have done, shall do, or can do, as things that be far too weak and insufficient and imperfect to deserve remission of sin and our *justification*. And therefore we must trust only in God's mercy, and that sacrifice which our High-priest and Saviour Christ Jesus, the Son of God, once offered for us upon the cross, to obtain thereby God's grace and *remission*, as *well of our original sin in baptism* as of all actual sin committed by us after our baptism, if we truly repent and turn unfeignedly to Him again.' And farther on in the same homily it is said: 'Our office is not to pass the time of this present life unfruitfully and idly after that we *are baptised or justified*.' In which passage it would seem as if baptism and justification were spoken of as, in some sense, the same thing. At any rate, it proves what I asserted, that the idea of a connexion between baptism and justification was clearly familiar to the minds of our reformers. I will just read you another passage from the first page of the same homily, relating rather to regeneration than justification, but expressly confirming what has been already stated. '*Infants being baptised*, and dying in their infancy,

are by this sacrifice (*i. e.* the sacrifice of Christ on the cross) washed from their sins, brought to God's favour, and made His children, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.' These passages, taken as illustrations of our formularies, prove beyond a question, that the notion of the benefits of baptism to infants being hypothetical, or incomplete, is no less contrary to the doctrine prevalent among the reformers, than to that of the Church in all ages."¹

Mr. L. "I thank you very sincerely for this explanation. There is another doctrine often mixed up with that of justification, though I confess I do not see how it is connected—namely, that of *imputed righteousness*. Where is this doctrine to be found?"

Mr. M. "No where, that I am aware of. Certainly not in Scripture."

Mr. L. "And yet one often hears of it."

Mr. M. "I know we do, in the writings of a certain school. But they appear to me to have built up a doctrine entirely of their own invention."

Mr. L. "But, allow me to ask, what is the *righteousness* whereby a Christian man is justified? Surely not our own?"

Mr. M. "No. We are justified by faith, for the sake of Christ's merits. Turn to the fourth chapter of the epistle to the Romans: 'Abraham *believed* in

¹ It may be observed also, that in the 9th Article, where the English words are, "there is no condemnation for them *that believe and are baptised*," the Latin are, "*renatis et credentibus*," *i. e.* that are *born again* and believe.

God, and the same was *imputed* to him *for* righteousness.' 'To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, *his faith* is counted for righteousness.' 'It was not written for his (Abraham's) sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, *if we believe* on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead.' It is clearly therefore faith, not Christ's righteousness, which is imputed to us for righteousness."

Mr. L. "Whence has arisen the doctrine of imputed righteousness?"

Mr. M. "It is connected with a string of fondly imagined doctrines, which certain persons have invented by arbitrary interpretation of Scripture, or have received one from another, until they have become the tradition of a school or party. For my part, I prefer keeping to the doctrine of St. Paul, that 'we are justified by faith,' or, as our article expresses it, 'we are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by faith, and not for our works or deservings.'"

Mr. L. "Certainly, if we keep to Scripture and the Church we are safe. Pray tell me now, how do you understand such texts as these:—'The Son of Man . . . shall reward every man according to his works.'¹ 'He that doeth righteousness is righteous,'² &c. Do they appear to you difficult to connect with the doctrine of justification by faith?"

¹ Matt. xvi. 27.

² 1 John iii. 7.

Mr. M. “Not at all. We are getting to an entirely different doctrine—the doctrine of judgment, or how we are to be saved in the end. You are now speaking of works done *after* justification. This doctrine is clearly stated in the creed. ‘They that have *done* good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have *done* evil into everlasting fire.’”¹

Mr. L. “I now perceive your system: you take the doctrine of Scripture on each point, and believe it, not deeming it absolutely necessary to reconcile one with another.”

Mr. M. “Exactly: as I believe that the Father is God; the Son, God; and the Holy Ghost, God; and yet that there are not three Gods, but one God. And yet I confess I do not see that any great difficulty exists in these doctrines which we have been speaking of, except such as men make for themselves. I heard a preacher the other day who contended that there were four kinds of justification, and seven kinds of faith, and I do not know how many sorts of righteousness;—and another who taught that the works according to which men are judged and rewarded, are not those done by each during his natural life, but those done by Christ eighteen hundred years ago!—that was his notion of justification by imputed righteousness! How can we wonder at the perplexity which exists in men’s minds, when such subtleties as these are broached? *Why cannot*

¹ Compare John v. 28, 29.

we believe simply, that we are regenerated by baptism, justified by faith, and rewarded according to our works; as it is plainly revealed in Scripture, and taught by the Church?"

After this conversation, I reflected and read a good deal on these subjects, and became clearly of my friend's opinion, that it is right to believe all that is plainly stated in Scripture, and taught therefrom by the Church. If a doctrine were only taught in Scripture (according to *our* interpretation of Scripture), we might suspect that we were wrong; but when we find it taught in Scripture, and received therefrom by the Church as the true doctrine or meaning of Scripture, then we are safe in receiving it as of undoubted certainty.

In accordance with my friend's advice, I now began to devote a considerable portion of my time to the study of the Fathers; rising early, and late taking rest, in order, as far as might be, to make up for former negligence. As far as I was able to do so, I found the Fathers fully confirm the views which I had received from my recent studies and conversation; and I often sincerely wished that I had known the value of their testimony at an earlier period of my career. One of the principal advantages which I derived from consulting these ancient writers was, that they removed my view from the miserable state of the actual body of professing Christians, with their schisms and various denominations, and fixed it on the ancient state of the Church, when

it was fresh from the hands of the Apostles—one and undivided—free from the contaminating influence of human systems, which have since impaired its excellency.



In religion
What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text ?
SHAKSPEARE, *The Merchant of Venice*.



CHAPTER XV.

The Fanatic.

THE more I saw of Mr. Manwaring, the more cause did I find for thankfulness that I had become acquainted with so excellent a friend. Besides his sound and sterling qualities, he had an inexhaustible fund of valuable information, which he continually brought to bear on the important subjects which we discussed together. One day he told me the following remarkable story, which so impressed my mind, that I committed it to writing; and doubt not that it will prove acceptable to my readers, as illustrative of an important class of phenomena in religion.

Mr. Manwaring was, as he informed me, on a visit in the west of England, where some of his friends resided. One evening he strolled out through the grounds, and leaving the enclosure, proceeded along a wild, romantic glen, which opened to the sea. The western sun had almost touched the horizon, and with its slanting ray illumined the crags and headlands which stretched away in bold magnificence as far as the eye could reach. As he walked

along the narrow pathway, on turning the corner of a rock, he became aware of a man at no great distance, who stood with his hands clasped, apparently in deep abstraction. When he perceived my friend approaching, he started from his attitude, and turned round with a wildness in his eye and restlessness of manner, which could scarcely be viewed without apprehension.

“Art thou, too, come,” said the stranger, “to view yon glorious luminary as he plunges beneath the waves?”

“’Tis a glorious sight, indeed,” replied my friend, “to look on the brightest and most splendid of God’s works.”

“Ah! I see thou knowest not the great secret. But the world *will* know it ere long. Yon source of light, which now sinks from our sight—he—he will proclaim to the world the vast secret which has long lain hid, or, if known to the wise of old, was connected with degrading superstitions.”

The eyes of the stranger rolled fearfully as he uttered these words; and, clasping his hands together, he again gazed intently on the setting sun, whose broad disk even then touched the horizon.

“Behold!” he exclaimed; “there he sets, to convey the blessing of his beams to other regions of the earth; and we shall be left without his presence, until, in his own appointed time, he shall again rise, with healing on his wings, to gladden and to bless us.”

My friend made no reply to his companion’s

strange discourse, but gazed with him in admiration on the fast-disappearing orb. As soon as the last portion had disappeared from view, the stranger laid his hand on my friend's arm.

"Let us sit down," said he, "on this rock; and while the sun's bright rays still illumine the horizon, I will reveal to you the great secret which ere long will be known throughout the world."

My friend complied with his wish, though beginning to be exceedingly doubtful as to the soundness of the stranger's intellect, who proceeded with his communication, of which the following is the substance:—He had long been doubtful and unsettled in his mind on religious subjects, and had endeavoured to correct his opinions by a course of deep study. Of the existence of a God and a Providence he had satisfied himself by the most indisputable proofs; for "who," said he, with kindling energy—"who can view the glorious universe, and not recognise the hand of the divine Architect?" He had also satisfied himself, by study and meditation, that the Bible was the word of God. The evidences of this fact were such as no unbiassed mind could resist. "Yes," said he, "there is a God; and He hath spoken to us by His Son. But then, *What is God? What is God?*" he repeated many times, with startling energy. This question, he said, had haunted him for days, and months, and years. It was his thought by day, his meditation by night. About two years past, he informed my friend, as he was meditating

on the awful subject in the dead of night, and unconsciously uttered to himself the oft-repeated question, "What is God?" he heard a deep unearthly voice, as of a person near him, "Ay, *What is God? Search the Scriptures, and thou shalt know.*" At the same time, a shadowy form appeared to stand before him in the moonlight, which, as he gazed on it, melted into the air. Since that time, the same form had often appeared, always answering to his inquiry, "What is God?" with the solemn words, "Search the Scriptures, and thou shalt know." Accordingly, as he informed my friend, he again began the perusal of the sacred volume; and to aid his studies, he retired to a small cottage on the sea-shore, and there, amidst the roaring of the waves and the howling of the tempest, with no other companion but his unearthly visitant, he continued to brood over the awful question, "What is God?"

Meanwhile his health became wasted with fasting and intense anxiety, and his spirit was almost broken. His spectral visitant had less frequently appeared; and often, when he uttered the fearful question, "What is God?" had omitted the usual addition, "Search, and thou shalt find," or had spoken it in a tone of mockery; until one day at eve, as the sun was dipping beneath the wave, and an unusual redness had spread itself over the heavens, the spectre, appearing in a larger form than usual, pronounced, in an eager tone, "*What is God? Read, and thou shalt know.*"

“I withdrew my eyes,” said the enthusiast, “from the overpowering sun; and as they rested on the sacred volume, the answer to my long-asked question appeared to stand forth from the text in glaring, burning characters—‘OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE.’ Yes,” said he, exultingly, “an answer was granted to my inquiry. My doubts were cleared up. The great secret revealed. *God is fire: fire is God.* God manifests Himself in the glorious sun, as he guides his chariot of fire through the high heaven; and He is seen in the warm flame which glows upon the hearth, and in the taper which sheds its useful ray around. His goodness is evidenced in his attributes of light and heat, without which we should be as dead men, cold, dark, and miserable. His power is seen in the forked lightning, the ravaging flame, the explosive gunpowder, the mighty steam: all these are the operation of the great God of fire. Since this great secret has been revealed, all Scripture has been clear and simple. Demonstrations of its truth meet me in every page. I no longer wonder at the flaming swords of the cherubim, the fires which burnt at Sinai, the cloven tongues which rested on the Apostles, or the Shekinah which dwelt between the cherubim. All are but manifestations of that God whose nature is fire. And hence it is that He delights in the burnt-offering, when its smoke ascends to heaven; and He will consume the elements themselves with fervent heat, and burn up the heavens like a scroll; and the wicked shall be condemned

to fire unquenchable, while the righteous shall dwell for ever in the bright light of His glory. Let *Him*, therefore, henceforth be the object of our adoration. I have revealed this great secret to many persons, and some have had the grace to acknowledge its truth. Even now we are organising a brotherhood, who, like the Apostles of old, shall go forth to proclaim the new revelation to every nation under heaven."

My friend listened with wonder to this wild and strange communication. He perceived at once that his companion was an earnest fanatic; and that any banter or ridicule would shock his feelings, without having the slightest effect in removing the delusion. He thought it better, however, before leaving him, to suggest a few scruples, which he might think on at his leisure. "How has it happened that this great secret has been overlooked by the Church universal for so many ages? The Apostles were expressly promised that they should be guided by the Spirit into all truth. How was it that they did not communicate this doctrine to the Church, if indeed it be a doctrine of Scripture?"

"It was reserved by God Himself for manifestation in these latter days; and He has selected *me* to be the instrument of His revelation."

"But if men will not believe, and continue to interpret Scripture after the old fashion, how, without the help of miracles, shall you be able to convince them?"

"The doctrine itself is of that obvious truth

and mighty efficacy, that it will convey instant conviction to every unprejudiced mind. And they who reject it will do so at their loss and peril."

My friend found it impossible to reason with one whose whole inner man was occupied by one pervading notion; and after accompanying him homeward in the evening twilight, he parted from him with an earnest exhortation to pray that God would teach him what he ought to do.

He found, on inquiry, that the poor gentleman's mind had been deranged on this one subject for several years. He was, in fact, a monomaniac; but having committed no violence, and being able to conduct himself rightly in regard to other subjects, he had been suffered to remain at large. Strange to say, he had found persons who gave credit to his wild doctrine, and had actually organised a sect, with the intention of going forth to proclaim his secret to the world. Whether the poor man had recovered from his delusion, or his efforts at proselytism had come to nothing, Mr. Manwaring was unable to inform me; but his comments on the subject are worthy to be recorded.

"This," said he, "is the broad example, or type, of all heresy and sectarianism; namely, to dwell on single texts or doctrines, to the neglect of the Church's teaching, or of the just analogy of the faith as revealed in holy Scripture. Error consists commonly in the excessive magnifying of particular doctrines, whether they be true or false. The latter is the least

dangerous ; for when the doctrine is false, its falsehood is detected. But when it is only the inordinate dwelling on a true doctrine which constitutes the sect, it is less easy to convict the error. I am told that the Jumpers, who abound in Wales, rest their doctrine on two passages in Scripture : David dancing before the ark, and the babe leaping in Elizabeth's womb. Amongst Predestinarians, there are men who so excessively magnify the doctrine of God's decrees, as to make it the foundation of all religion, and do away with the fact of man's accountability. The Arians regard only the declaration of our Lord, that ' My Father is greater than I,' and refuse to listen to the other distinct avowal, ' I and my Father are one.' The Socinians dwell so entirely on the resurrection and the judgment, as to deny the doctrine of the atonement, and consider the sacrifice of our Lord to be a mere figure of speech. In like manner, the Zuinglians and Calvinists explain away in metaphor the doctrine of the sacraments, deny baptismal regeneration, and the real presence of our Lord in the eucharist, from their excessive zeal for the doctrine of justification by faith. I verily believe that some men dwell on this great and true doctrine, to the exclusion of all others, with almost as much fanaticism as the poor stranger, whose story I have related to you, dwelt on the notion that ' our God is a consuming fire.' No sobriety of doctrine or certainty of truth can be attained, except by adherence to that form of sound doctrine collected by

the Church from holy Scripture, and received from the Apostles themselves. In this the just relation of doctrine to doctrine, the proportionate magnitude of each, is set forth ; and those essential truths which are necessary for salvation are distinguished from such as may be lawfully held in different ways, without the imputation of heresy. Keep to the Church's teaching, so long as she teaches out of God's word, and we are safe ; but so soon as we leave her guidance, and choose one doctrine in preference to another, and endeavour to group all religious truth around one or two favourite doctrines, after some system of our own selection, we are liable to be lost in a sea of doubt and difficulty, and become heretics, separatists, and fanatics ; or, to say the least, very indifferent Churchmen."



If blessed wedlock may not bless,
Without some tinge of bitterness,
To dash her cup of joy, since Eden lost,
Chaining to earth with strong desire
Hearts that would highest else aspire,
And o'er the tenderer sex usurping ever most;

Yet by the light of Christian lore,
'Tis blind idolatry no more,
But a sweet help, and pattern of true love,
Shewing how best the soul may cling
To her immortal Spouse and King,—
How He should rule, and she with full desire approve.

KEBLE.



CHAPTER XVI.

Marriage and Competence.

I HAVE now to record two important changes in my circumstances. One was, my removal to another parish, of which I was appointed rector ; the other, my marriage. Thus, while my duties as a minister of the Gospel remained the same, my situation in life, my views and prospects, were greatly altered. Instead of being an unmarried curate of very limited means—wedded, if I may so speak, to my parish—I had become the head of a household, the rector of a parish, and, in a worldly view, advanced to that respectable station which is occupied by the well-endowed English clergyman.

Was I, or was I not, the better for this change?—that is the question. Most ungrateful, indeed, should I be to the affectionate and devoted partner of my joys and sorrows—nay, most thankless to the Giver of all good gifts—if I did not bless and praise Him for His mercies, and acknowledge that to Him I am indebted for the manifold comforts of a happy

home, and also for increasing opportunities of promoting His glory. Still the question, Was I, or was I not, the better for my change? is one which may be asked: or perhaps it would be more fitly proposed in general terms—Which is best circumstanced, a poor and unmarried, or an affluent and married, clergy?

There are excellent and worthy men who, seeing the lamentable state of our population, and the slight influence which in many places the clergy exercise over the poorer classes, attribute the evil, not to that cause to which it is commonly assigned, namely, the inadequacy of the number of the clergy to cope with the population; but to their wealth and competency, which induces them to marry, and occupy themselves in worldly pursuits, and become secularised in their habits, instead of devoting their lives to their ministerial labours.

I had a correspondence not long ago with an excellent friend, on the lamentable inadequacy of the number of the clergy, and the insufficiency of the provision made in new endowments even to secure to the minister the decent comforts of life. He admitted the inadequacy of the clergy in point of numbers, but contended that it required a higher motive than a good endowment to recruit them. "The motive," he said, "for which a clergyman enters the Church at present is,—decent provision, an easy life, opportunity of marrying earlier than other professions would admit, the chance of getting the great prizes.

But surely these inducements are not such as will ensure an adequate supply of competent persons." My friend had lately been travelling in Belgium and Prussia, in which countries the parochial ministers are miserably endowed, forty pounds per annum being in general the maximum for a parish priest. In Prussia he had introductions to many ecclesiastics; and found them, without exception, far better informed persons than the majority of clergy in this country. It is possible, however, that his introductions may have been to some who were more distinguished than the rest; as a stranger coming to England would be more likely to have introductions to the more distinguished and intelligent of our clergy than to others. But so far as my friend's observation went, he found the Prussian clergy "attentive to their duties—really good men."

In England, on the contrary, he thinks that the best-endowed benefices are occupied almost exclusively by clergy below the average in attention to their duties. Endowments are universally considered as the private property of the incumbent, to be employed for his own purposes. An increase in the income of a benefice does not generally increase the advantages to the people of the parish, but merely the comforts and luxuries of the incumbent. The incumbent of 200*l.* per annum has, perhaps, one female servant; of 400*l.* per annum, two maids and a boy; at 600*l.* a pony chaise is added; at 800*l.* or

1000*l.* per annum, the servants are in livery ; and beyond that, horses and close carriages appear ;—but the actual attention and duty towards the parishioners is about the same in all. The cause of this, he considered, to be the erroneous notion, that the endowment is the private property of the incumbent, and not a trust for the benefit of the parish.

Now there is certainly too much truth in this picture ; and there can be no doubt, that a married clergyman is more liable than an unmarried one to have his attention diverted from his ministerial duties, and his worldly means forestalled, by the necessities of his family. We have Divine authority for this statement : “ He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord : but he that is married careth for the things that are of the world—how he may please his wife.”¹ A clergyman marries, perhaps, the daughter of a gentleman in the same station with himself, and considers himself in some degree bound to maintain her in the style of life to which she has been accustomed. She is to have her furniture, and servants, and comforts, and conveniences, like her neighbours. And then comes a family, who are to be provided for ; money is to be laid by, or a considerable insurance to be paid. The friends and relations of his wife would, perhaps with justice, complain if this were not done. There can be no doubt, that a clergyman

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 32.

who, if unencumbered, might devote his time and wealth to his flock, is, in a manner, obliged to employ a considerable portion of each differently, if he has a wife and family.

There is, however, a great deal to be said on the other side. Compare Prussia or Belgium, and their poor impoverished clergy, with England, and her endowed Church; and if we find much to lament in England—much evil, arising perhaps, in some measure, from the wealth in which some of her clergy live—we shall, I fear, find in those countries even more to deplore, which may be traced to the poverty and degradation of their clergy. It is a lamentable fact, that where the clergy are poor, and, still more, where they are unmarried, infidelity is found to prevail amongst the higher classes, and gross immorality in all. The state of religion amongst the Teutonic gentry is thus described by a recent traveller:—"If we look at the higher classes, we find them exactly in that relation to an insignificant poverty-stricken Church (whose ministers are as much beneath them in birth as income), as might be expected. The pastors are respected, as exercising a wholesome restraint over the lower orders, of which the upper ones reap the social benefit; are received with a proud look of condescension at the tables of the count or baron; and, in their turn, forbear all remonstrances against the widely-spreading rationalism which infects the no-

bility, and of which, in truth, they themselves, in the capacity of family tutors, are too frequently the instillers. Upon the whole, here seems as great a need for the re-introduction of Christianity as ever ; and could Luther arise from his grave, he would find the Bible as strictly banished from the portion of a community professing his doctrine, as in the worst time of papal policy. Thus it is that the Lutheran religion, as established in these provinces, is a standing memorial of a reformation, which, in its hurry to throw off the errors of the old system, has sacrificed also its truths ; and *a glaring instance of the inefficiency of a Church unendowed with wealth, consequence, or dignity, among a class where such qualities are held in high estimation ; and where are they not ?*" It is, I believe, an unquestionable fact, that in the Austrian dominions, where the Roman Catholic religion prevails, the same picture is presented. In England, on the contrary, it is not too much to say, that a purer morality and much greater attachment to religion is found amongst the wealthy and higher classes. The clergy mix freely with those of other professions, are respected as men of education ; and the respectability of their character and manner of life communicates itself to the society in which they are found. When a priesthood is despised for its poverty, it requires very great purity and excellence in its members to counterbalance the evil ; and I fear the universal testimony

proves that an unmarried clergy are not exempt from the temptation to which laymen are subject under the same circumstances. The rules laid down by St. Paul, on the matter of marriage, apply equally to clergy and laymen. If a man has the gift of continence, and devotes his whole life, his soul and body, to God's service—if he has resolution to leave all the comforts and luxuries of life, and, like St. Paul, travel from place to place conveying the blessed word¹ of truth to heathen^j nations—or if he is willing to devote himself to the noble endeavour to convey Gospel-light to our dense population at home,—that man is viewed with especial approval by God, and he takes a higher rank amongst the saints in heaven, and reaps an exceeding rich reward. If the whole priesthood of a country were of this description, truly the nation would have cause to rejoice; and there can be no doubt that in days of persecution, those are least likely to apostatise who have inured themselves to self-denying labours. It is amongst such men as these that the saints and martyrs are found.

But all men have not this gift; neither does God require it of them. The word of God distinctly allows the clergy to marry, as well as others:—“Marriage is honourable *in all*;¹” “If thou marry, thou hast not sinned; nevertheless, such shall have

¹ Heb. xiii. 4.

trouble in the flesh.”¹ A bishop, it is expressly said, “shall be the husband of (but) one wife.”² Experience seems to prove that they who, from high conscientious motives, can without damage abstain from marriage, are the exceptions from the general rule : and that for a country generally, in the present state of the world, a married is better than an unmarried priesthood.

But, after all, where is the necessity of the comparison ? *Why not have the advantages of both ?* Might we not retain the present system of our clergy being family men ? presenting in each parish the pattern of a respectable household ; while the higher tone which is growing up in the Church shall render them more diligent and self-denying, so that they shall set their equals and superiors in station a wholesome example of denying themselves excessive luxuries. If a wealthy clergyman with a family contents himself with more moderate living, less costly furniture, less expensive equipage, than his means might seem to warrant, it is much to be hoped that some of his lay neighbours might be induced to do likewise ; unless it be admitted, that though the clergy are to set an example, the laity are not to follow it. Surely the greatest possible good might be effected by a well-endowed married clergy, who were patterns of self-denial to their neighbours.

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 28.

² Titus, i. 6.

Nor must we leave out of the account the important value of an active and devoted clergyman's wife, who shall aid her husband in his parochial duties, and render a variety of good offices to her poorer neighbours, which her husband might not have leisure or opportunity to perform.

But, on the other hand, why should we not *also* have unmarried clergy, who shall devote themselves to God's service—unmarried bishops, who shall vie with the prelates of ancient times in their munificence and zeal for God's honour—unmarried priests and deacons, who shall dedicate their lives to reclaiming the waste places of the heathen? Nay, why should we not also have unmarried laymen, who shall

Spurn delights, and live laborious days ;

not in amassing wealth, or winning renown before men, or political power ; but labouring for God's glory and the salvation of the souls of men. Of all instruments to evangelise our great towns, nothing, perhaps, would be so efficacious as the establishment of colleges of priests or laymen, not bound by compulsory vows of celibacy, though generally proposing to themselves an unmarried state, and, as long as they maintain it, living together under the control of the parochial priest, whom they shall aid in their ministration. The time seems almost ripe for an attempt of the sort. Let but prejudice subside, and high religious feeling continue to spread

itself, and we may yet see our cities christianised by the exertion of men, who, like St. Paul, shall devote their lives to the increase of God's glory, and count every thing as loss for the sake of Christ crucified.

•



**Himself is conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too.**

COWPER.



CHAPTER XVII.

The new Living.

THE new scene of my ministerial labours was the old market town of High Kirkstall, of which I was appointed rector. It was not without much prayer and serious thoughts of heart that I entered upon this new sphere of action. When I first ventured upon the sacred function, the immense responsibilities of the ministerial office were unknown to me. The experience which I had gained at my curacy had fully opened my eyes to the deep importance of my situation ; and now that I was about to become God's ambassador and the steward of His mysteries to four thousand souls, I resolved, with much prayer for aid, to devote the whole energies of my mind and body to the right performance of my arduous duties, in humble dependence on His all-powerful grace, and thankfulness for the assistance afforded by the ordinances and instruction of the Church. The difficulties of my situation were in some degree increased by the circumstance, that my two predecessors had been, the one, I am sorry to say, negligent in his duties, and

the other, who succeeded him, not possessed of a zeal according to knowledge, but one who considered the feelings of the times, rather than the ordinances of the Church, to be the ground of his operation. Many of the practices which he had introduced into the parish were directly opposed to the rubrics and canons ; and, as my principle was, that the free development of the Church-system was the safest and surest mode of winning souls to Christ, I found myself somewhat hampered by the arrangements of my predecessor. Several times before entering upon the duties of my living, I discussed the subject with my friend Mr. Manwaring ; and with his advice I came to the conclusion, that the best plan would be, to take the rubric for my guide, and act upon it as a matter of course, from the beginning. If the congregation did not see the propriety of my strict adherence to the order of the Church, they would set it down as a fancy of the new minister, and make allowance ; and so the injunctions of the Church would soon become customary. Fortunately, there had not then arisen that wicked newspaper-agitation, which represents conformity to the ordinances of the Church as popery, and the minds of my parishioners had not been poisoned by party-feeling. At the present time, in consequence of the ignorant prejudices of some, and sinful misrepresentations of others, it is very doubtful whether a clergyman who conscientiously acted upon the established order of the Church would not

be in danger of alienating or even driving from the Church many unstable and ill-instructed persons. But no such party-feeling had been excited when I took possession of my new living. So I commenced my operations by bringing the services as closely as possible into harmony with the directions given in the Prayer-book. The old clerk was rather surprised when he heard my announcement, that there would be daily prayer ; and would not at first believe me that there was any rubric to that effect ; but after applying his spectacles to his nose, and reading aloud the first sentence in the Prayer-book, "The Order of Morning Prayer, to be used *daily* throughout the year," he was satisfied that I was right, though he had never observed it before.

"But," said he, "you will have no congregation."

"It is my duty to try, at all events."

"And am I to come here every day, sir?" said he, in a tone of alarm.

"It will be most proper, certainly ; though we might do without you."

Old people are not pleased at being put out of their way ; and the venerable functionary at first did not like the new arrangement. However, he soon got reconciled to the increase of his labours ; and, as a good Christian naturally would, he began to take a great delight in the daily service. "It set him up," he said, "in good thoughts for the rest of the day." After a while, I thought it right to do what I would not do at first, as it would have looked like bri-

bery,—I made a considerable increase to his salary, for the additional time which the duties of his office now demanded, beyond what had before been required of him : this appeared to me but fair.

With regard to the fasts and festivals, I proceeded just as I had done at Somerton ; that is, exactly as it is ordered in the rubric which follows the Nicene Creed. I gave due notice to my congregation of the first saint's-day which occurred ; and in my sermon I took occasion to explain to them, that my object was to conform, as strictly as possible, to the instructions in the Prayer-book ; and that though I might seem to be making innovations, yet that in reality what I did was only in accordance with the rubrics, which I was bound to obey. I also set forth the great advantage which the fasts and festivals would be to those who used them aright,—not as meritorious observances (as the Romish Church too commonly viewed them), but as means of increasing holiness and devotion, of exercising self-denial, of bringing holy thoughts to our recollection, setting examples of holy men before our eyes, and giving a reality to religion which it was difficult for those to attain who confined their religious observance to the Lord's day, and neglected the other opportunities of devotion afforded by the Church.

My predecessor had been esteemed as a preacher ; and I considered it my duty to use my utmost exertions to maintain the credit of the pulpit ; and had

the satisfaction of thinking that, with God's help, I succeeded, and was not thought to fall short of the clergyman whom I had followed. I will not record the complimentary speeches made by the church-wardens and other respectable people ; but perhaps I may, without the imputation of vanity, set down the speech of one old parishioner, which, though rather an equivocal compliment, I heard with pleasure :—

“ Well, sir, I have lived a good many years in the parish, and must say you are the *plainest* gentleman we have ever had in our pulpit.”

There was one part of the service which rather puzzled me, and caused me a good deal of consideration. The custom in most churches, after the Nicene Creed, is, for a psalm to be sung by the congregation, during which time the clergyman changes his surplice for a black gown. Indeed, I heard of one clergyman, though it is some years ago, who used to take off his ordinary scratch-wig, and put on a handsome well-powdered periwig,—which, by the way, is more orthodox than the change of gown ; for there is no order of the Church, that I know of, about scratch-wigs or periwigs, but there *is* an order that every clergyman shall wear a surplice, and none for him to change it, according to the present practice. As soon as the toilet in the vestry is completed, the gown duly changed, and the psalm concluded, the clergyman commences with a prayer—sometimes from the liturgy, with or

without alterations, sometimes an extemporary effusion of his own; and then proceeds to give out his text. Now, there is nothing about all this in the rubric. It is simply ordered, that after the Nicene Creed (when the curate shall have given notice of the holy days, and fasting-days, and other matters), "*then shall follow the sermon, or one of the homilies.*" Not a word is said in the rubric about the change of dress, or the psalm, or the prayers, whether extemporary or otherwise. In truth, the sermon is not, as it now appears, a division of the service, but simply a part of the communion. I accordingly swept away at once the psalm,¹ the black gown, and the prayers, and walked straight up into the pulpit, and gave out my text. Then, after the sermon, I returned to the altar, and went on with the service which follows; namely, the offertory, and the prayer for the Church militant, or, as old Simon used to call it, the "prayer militant."

It is true there is a canon which directs, that "before all sermons, lectures, and homilies, the preacher and minister shall move the people to join

¹ I do not say that the psalm is *unlawful*—only, that it is not *ordered*; and I question whether that is a good place for it. The singing authorised in our Prayer-book is the chanting of the Psalter, the hymns, and the anthem after the third collect, which, in the Morning Service, comes before the Litany. But as, in many churches, a regular anthem would be too difficult, it seems very proper to substitute, *in its place*, a psalm from a metrical version which has received the royal authority.

with him in prayer, in this form, or to this effect, as briefly as conveniently they may:—Ye shall pray for Christ's holy Catholic Church," &c. This is apparently at variance with the rubric; and, of the two, the rubric is decidedly the most binding. At any rate, it is quite clear, that if any prayer is to be used, it ought to be this bidding-prayer, or one to the same effect; and therefore they who use long extemporaneous effusions of a different character, or even a simple collect from the liturgy, conform as little to the canon as those who use none. But I was inclined, after a good deal of consideration, to think that the rubric and canon are reconcilable in this way—that the bidding-prayer is to be used before all sermons *when there is no service*—a circumstance which took place very frequently in former days, and is still continued at the universities; and that *when there is a service*, then we should conform to the rubric, which orders that after the Nicene Creed shall follow the sermon. This opinion seemed strengthened by the consideration, that the bidding-prayer appears an unnatural break in the service; it does not seem reasonable to bid people to pray for what they have but just done praying for in the previous service.¹ The topics also contained in the bidding-prayer are precisely the same as those in the prayer for the Church mili-

¹ In accordance with this view, it is ordered, in the Injunctions of Edward VI., that when there is a sermon or homily, the bidding-prayer shall be substituted for the prime and hours.

tant, which follows the sermon. To use any other prayer in that place except a bidding-prayer, and the Lord's prayer, is unquestionably wrong, at least there is no authority for it; but I judged, on the whole, that the most suitable plan was, to use no prayer at all before the sermon. It gives an unnecessary prominence and consequence to the sermon, which has in the present day arrived at a pernicious height—people often going to church only to hear the sermon; and therefore any plan which would have the effect of bringing the sermon down to its proper level, and avoiding the unnecessary break which occurred in the service, appeared to me desirable. These arguments I stated plainly to the churchwardens, and they were perfectly satisfied. Had they been otherwise, I should have referred the case to the bishop, and abided by his decision.

Besides the Sunday sermons, I continued my predecessor's plan of having a weekly lecture, only altering it from the Thursday to the Wednesday, that being a day which the Church seems to mark for more special observance. I preached a series of discourses on the Prayer-book, beginning at the title-page, and going straight on through the preface, shewing the occasion of its institution, the reason why some rites were retained and some abolished, the principles on which the calendar was formed, and so proceeding to the Order of Morning Service. The people I found very attentive to these things. They began to see the reason of the different ser-

vices, and to value them more, and would, I am convinced, be less disposed to leave them for any other communion.

I have to thank God that my labours were blessed with an evident success. Not only were the Sunday congregations as numerous as heretofore—indeed, as I was assured, rather more so—but there was an improvement in their devotion, which is a very good symptom. We can judge but by outward signs; and surely there is no greater proof of improvement than in those little traits of devoutness which it rejoices one so much to witness. A crowded congregation listening to a popular preacher is a poor sign of sinners won to ways of holiness; but when reverence and devotion are plainly seen—when the congregation come evidently to worship, and not *only* to hear,—one has a right to hope the best.



**Who, uncalled by Thee,
Dare touch Thy spouse, Thy very self below ?
Or who dare count him summoned worthily,
Except Thine hand and seal he shew ?**

KEBLE.



CHAPTER XVIII.

The Case of Dissenters.

THERE was only one body of men who viewed my proceedings with dissatisfaction. These were the Dissenters, who abounded in the parish when I arrived there, but, I am thankful to say, have since much diminished in numbers. Manifold were the expedients to which they resorted in order to prejudice me in the eyes of my congregation. Of course, the principal charge against me was, that I was an abettor of popery. What could be so popish as to keep fasts and festivals? What so uncharitable as to revive the Athanasian Creed? What so monstrous as the doctrine of the apostolic succession, which unchurched all those who did not belong to the Establishment? Then there was the soul-destroying heresy of baptismal regeneration—a doctrine which my predecessor had had the good sense to drop. “Well,” said they, “let him go on, and the people will soon find him out. He is popular now, because he is a new comer; but give him rope enough, and—we shall see.”

However, the result anticipated did not come to pass. I continued to preach the doctrines of the Church; and my congregation, so far from disliking them, began to understand them, and to be able to make use of them against the Dissenters. For though I made a point of never alluding to the Dissenters by name (except when I could not avoid it), yet the topics which I introduced into my sermons were indirectly a reproof to them. To preach on the unity of the Church, implied blame on those who separated themselves from it, and refused to worship or communicate with their brethren. To explain that God's ministers were appointed by divine commission, of course implied that those who were not so commissioned were not God's ministers. In fact, the whole Church-system which I set forth was tantamount to a protest against dissent. Another thing which vexed them (though I really could not help it) was my refusal, for conscientious reasons, to meet them on neutral ground, or to have any religious communion whatever with those who would not worship with me in the Church. And, surely, if they thought so ill of Church-people as to refuse to join their worship, it was most unreasonable that they should complain if Churchmen were not cordial with them on less important matters. But the principal cause of their anger was the progress which Church-opinions made, and the secession of some of their own members from the meeting-house. All these things gave ample scope for discussion in a small

community like that of High-Kirkstall. I was attacked several times, with some bitterness and scurrility, in the radical papers; but of this I took no notice. Tracts and handbills were spread profusely amongst my congregation, though without much effect. I might well have declined to answer them. But as I believed the Dissenters themselves to be a portion of that flock over which, as parochial minister, I was by the providence of God appointed, I thought it a good opportunity, in preference to preaching in the church, where the Dissenters would not hear me, to draw up my views on the subject in the form of a tract or pamphlet, which I circulated amongst them. The following is a copy:—

The Danger of Dissent.

I. *That it is not uncharitable nor presumptuous to warn Dissenters of their danger.*

The obligations of Christian charity are much misunderstood or misrepresented in the present day: and yet, when plainly stated, they seem obvious enough. Suppose we were to see a person walking on heedlessly in the direction of a dangerous pit, apparently quite unconscious of his danger, what would be the conduct which Christian charity would require of us? Would it be right to say to ourselves, *Perhaps* he may not fall into it; or, *Perhaps* it may not be deep; and so let him go on?

No, surely; there cannot be a question that it would be our duty to call out as loudly as we could, to warn him of his danger.

This is, in truth, the principle of all Missionary-Societies, and Societies for the Propagation of the Gospel. We believe the heathen to be living in a state of danger ; we believe that the Bible contains the revelation of God's will, and the way of salvation ; therefore we willingly subscribe our money for the holy purpose of maintaining those ministers whom the bishop shall ordain, as heralds of Gospel-truth, to gather in the heathen to the Church of Christ.

Dissenters act from the same motive, though, as we believe, not regularly ; still their motive we are bound to think is good and charitable.

Suppose, then, that when a missionary—a Dissenter it might be—went to a heathen prince—the king of Otaheite, or a New Zealand chief, or the emperor of China—and told him that he was come to warn him of his danger, and teach him the way of salvation,—the said king, prince, or emperor, was to fly out into a violent passion, and say, “What do these impertinent people mean by telling me I am in danger ? Do they suppose I cannot go to heaven in my own way ? Illiberal bigots ! do they think *they* only know the way of salvation ?”

Now, there is nothing very unlikely or unnatural in this supposition ; it would but be an ebullition of poor human nature. There is some plausibility in the heathen's words ; and yet the Dissenter, who had conscientiously contributed to the sending out of the missionary, would not consider that such a reception of his charity released him from the duty of endeavouring again and again to win the heathen to the faith.

Apply now the above illustration to the relation between Churchmen and Dissenters. I do not scruple to say that, in common with many others, I consider

Dissenters to be in a state of great spiritual danger. Dissent is schism: and schism is a sin. There ought not to be any such thing as dissent. Men are not at liberty, by God's law, to dissent from that which is the true Church. They are, therefore, in sin, and consequently in danger. My reasons for believing so will be given hereafter. All I want now to establish is, that believing this to be the fact, and having, as I think, strong reasons for my belief, the Dissenter ought not to think me uncharitable or illiberal, if I express my fears for his safety; on the contrary, he will do well to weigh seriously the reasons which I have to bring forward, the rather because what I am about to advance is not my own personal opinion only; but, as I undertake to prove, it is what the Church universal has received for eighteen hundred years as the doctrine of Scripture.

II. *Reason for believing Dissenters to be in a state of great danger.*

When our Lord Jesus Christ sent forth His Apostles to convert and teach all nations, His commission was as follows:—"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."¹ "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."² There cannot be, I suppose, a difference of opinion as to the plain meaning of these words; namely, that faith *and baptism* are necessary to salvation. This position may be corroborated by very many passages from the Acts of the Apostles,—as in the case of Saint Paul, the Ethiopian eunuch, and the

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

² Mark xvi. 16.

Philippian jailor, in which it invariably appears, that as soon as a new convert professed his faith in Christ, he was straightway baptized ; *nor was he a member of the Christian Church until that holy sacrament had been received.*

Now, I entreat my dissenting readers, and I do so most solemnly and earnestly, to bear with my bigotry and illiberality, when I express my serious apprehensions that they *have never received Christian baptism.* What, some will say, do you unchristianize us? Was there ever such bigotry? All I answer is, Abuse, but hear me. The question is not, whether the statement is liberal or illiberal, but whether it is true or false.

Let me beg of you to take the word of God for your guide, and consider whether you can *prove* to your own satisfaction that you have ever certainly been baptized. What is baptism? and who can perform that holy ceremony? If any person, no matter who, throw water on me, and utter certain words, would that be Christian baptism? Would God's grace go with it? Can a child or a woman baptize? If not, who then can baptize? Our Lord said to His Apostles, "Go ye, and baptize all nations." The Apostles, before their departure from the world, commissioned others to perform this and other ministerial functions. Again, the Bishops whom they ordained commissioned others in their turn. There never was any doubt that persons so ordained by the bishops have authority and power to baptize; but whether any other have the same power, there is very great doubt. The authorized practice of the Church universal has been for ordained ministers to baptize, and any other baptism has been held as not valid; that is, as being no baptism at all. It is true there have been

differences of opinion on the subject. Some have supposed that baptism by the hands of one who had received the ministerial commission, and afterwards became a heretic, or separated from the Church, would still be valid. Others have thought that, *in a case of emergency*, if a child is sprinkled with water in the name of the blessed Trinity, even by an unordained person, it is valid. But neither of these cases applies to *unordained* persons baptizing *without emergency*; and there are some Dissenters who do not even baptize in the name of the blessed Trinity. The whole question is full of difficulty. Our own Church, in the twelfth article of the Convocation of 1575, decides that baptism "is only to be ministered by a lawful minister or deacon;" and in the service she directs that in cases of doubtfulness, her ministers shall use this form of words:—"If thou art not already baptized, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

Now, I beg Dissenters to observe the point of my argument. I do not mean positively to assert (God forbid!) that they have not been baptized; God is their judge; but I do assert that there is great reason to *doubt* whether they have been baptized or no. But this is a most awful question. "As many as have been baptized into Christ," says St. Paul, "have put on Christ."¹ If they have not been baptized into Christ, they have not put on Christ. "By one Spirit," he says in another place, "ye are baptized into one body."² If they, then, have not been baptized, they are not members of that spiritual body. But why, in such an awful question, remain in doubt? Why not make certain? If a man were informed by some kind friend of a flaw in his title-

¹ Gal. iii. 27.² Rom. xii. 13.

deeds, would he not instantly take measures to remove it? If the deed by which he possessed his property had not been duly signed and sealed, or witnessed by the proper persons, would he let a day elapse before he took steps to remove the flaw? Let not the Dissenter accuse me of desiring to deprive him of any privilege which he possesses. On the contrary, my earnest hope is to induce him to take measures to possess himself of what there is reason to fear he has not. I wish to prevail on him to remove the flaw and doubtfulness of his title to heaven, by going, with humble faith and penitence for his "sins, negligences, and ignorances," to one of those of whom there can be no doubt that they have received a commission to perform this essential sacrament. This is too serious a matter to be lightly regarded.

III. *Second reason for believing Dissenters to be in danger.*

The second reason which I shall state is very analogous to the former.

Our Lord Jesus Christ said to His disciples, in a most solemn and emphatic manner, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."¹ This was a hard saying; and it does not appear that, at the first, the disciples understood it. Subsequent events, however, explained its meaning. On the night before His

¹ John vi. 53. This passage has always been considered by the Church to refer to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. But even suppose otherwise, still the obligation on all persons who have opportunity to partake of the holy communion is proved from the terms of its institution, and has never been doubted amongst Christians.

crucifixion, “Jesus took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, *This is my body*. Likewise, after supper He took the cup, and gave it to them, saying, *This is my blood* of the new testament, which was shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins. *Drink ye ALL of it.*” Again, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul said, “*The cup which we bless*, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”¹

In accordance with these and various other passages of Scripture, the Church of all ages has held of this as of the other sacrament, that it is “generally necessary for salvation;” that is to say, that unless any obstacle prevent, we cannot be saved without it. As by baptism we are grafted into the body of Christ, so by the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, rightly administered and faithfully received, we continue therein: “we dwell in Christ, and He in us; we are one with Christ, and He with us.”

Now, if there was a doubt as to the possibility of baptism being duly administered by one who has not received God’s commission to do so, the doubt is very much greater with regard to the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. The cup *which we bless*, said St. Paul, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The cup which *who* bless? The cup which *any* man, woman, or child blesses, is *that* the communion of the blood of Christ—the means of conveying to us His most sacred blood? No, surely; the cup which was blessed by the *Apostles*, and those who, through them, received

¹ See Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22; Luke xxii. 1; 1 Cor. xi. 23.

the Divine commission to do so. In every age of the Church, these have been well known as the persons who are authorised to consecrate the bread and wine. Persons presuming to do so without the Divine commission have been looked on as exceeding sinners, and their act as null and void.

The most serious and alarming consideration is involved in this doctrine ; namely, *whether Dissenters have ever eaten the body, or drunk the blood of Christ*, without which, we are expressly told, “ there is no life in us,”—whether the sacrament which they have partaken of be not a *mock sacrament*, that is to say, *no sacrament at all*. But this is not the whole. If any man wilfully has thus, as it were, parodied the holy sacrament, it is much to be feared that he has eaten and drunk his own condemnation, not considering the Lord’s body. Even in the case of those who have ignorantly partaken of such mock-sacrament (of which class I verily believe most Dissenters to be), still, with whatsoever good intention they have partaken, it cannot be supposed, at least it cannot be proved, that an *unreal* sacrament can have conveyed to them any benefit, or in any way have strengthened or refreshed their souls. If the food which we receive into our natural bodies possess not in itself any inherent wholesomeness or nutritiveness, it matters not with what appetite we eat it.

And here, again, let it not be said that we seek to deprive the Dissenters of any benefit or privilege ; on the contrary, we would earnestly entreat them to come and partake of all the privileges which we have to offer, “ without money and without price.”

IV. *Third reason for believing Dissenters to be in great danger.*

The third reason which I shall mention is, *their separation from the one Catholic and Apostolic Church.*

This topic requires some preliminary explanation. The Dissenter believes in an invisible Church, consisting of all those who truly believe in Christ. And so do we, in common with the Church of all ages, believe in an invisible Church—a union of all saints and martyrs, and holy men of old who have lived and died, and those who now live in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship. This we call the "communion of saints." But we also believe "one Catholic and Apostolic Church;" a *visible* body mercifully founded by Christ, in order to constitute the point of union of Christians in all ages, as well as for various other providential uses. In denying this doctrine of a Catholic Church, *as well as* a communion of saints, the Dissenter maintains an opinion in direct opposition to the Apostles' Creed, which has been received in the Church from the beginning. The doctrine in question may be proved also from several texts of Scripture. Our Saviour says, if a man "neglect to hear the Church, let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican."¹ But if the Church be invisible only, how can we know it when it speaks? Again, St. Paul calls the Church "the pillar and ground of the truth."² How can an *invisible* Church be to us the pillar and ground of the truth? The Dissenters say, each man's Church or communion is to him the pillar and ground of the truth? The Baptist's society is the pillar and ground to him, the Socinian's to him, and the Church of Eng-

¹ Matt. xviii. 17.

² 1 Tim. iii. 15.

land to its own members. What follows? Why, first, that on this principle each man's own opinion is to him the pillar and ground of the truth; next, that we have a multitude of pillars setting forth, or upholding, contradictory truths! One pillar bearing inscribed on it, that Jesus is a mere man; another, that He is "very God of very God." Now, that these pillars, setting forth, or upholding as the truth, doctrines directly contradictory to each other, should be all true Churches, is impossible. Therefore, it is manifest that there must be one, and only one, true Church, which, by the superintending providence of God, shall maintain for ever the essential truths of revelation.

Such a Church is that founded by the Apostles, which, through the revolution of kingdoms, and the cloud of thick darkness that during many ages rested on the earth, has still maintained the vital and essential truths of the blessed Gospel. It was this visible Church which first preached the Gospel, and gathered in the nations to the fold of Christ. The same Church it was that collected the holy Scriptures as we now have them, and has been "the witness and keeper" of God's word down to the present time. It is the same Church which, when those Scriptures were misinterpreted by subtle men, promulgated her creeds for the edification of her children. In times of darkness and barbarism, when learning and science were well nigh lost upon the earth, and the Church herself was overlaid with superstition, still, in a wonderful manner, she was the instrument of God to preserve the sacred Scripture, and the great doctrines gathered out of Scripture in her creeds, together with the apostolic succession of the ministry commissioned to administer to the people the holy sacraments. And

as she has preserved the truth in *dark* ages, no less important is her use for the same purpose in an age of *light*. Amidst the conflicting opinions and jarring theories of the present schismatical and unbelieving age, still the Church preserves the faith of Christ; and still in her creeds she upholds, as on a pillar, the fundamental truths of the Gospel, so that he who runs may read; and still she is the dispenser of divine grace through her sacraments and ordinances, even as God appointed her at the beginning.

If any one finds it difficult to follow this argument, from want of the habit of considering the Church as one great whole, let me draw his attention to the circumstances of our own branch of the Church universal, the history of which, it may be presumed, he has considered. There was a time—in the reigns of Elizabeth and James—when the English Church, purged of Romish corruption, and restored to her ancient purity, was one and entire, and maintained, in all essential points, the apostolic doctrine and fellowship. Then rose up certain men who “caused divisions,” contrary to the received doctrine, and began to “walk disorderly.” First, the bishop of Rome, contrary to all ecclesiastical order, sent emissaries into the dioceses of the English bishops; and in several places established schismatical communion, endeavouring to bring back the corruptions and superstitions which the English Church had, with almost universal consent, removed, as inconsistent with Scripture and the practice of the ancient Church. Then, other sectarians, under the name of Brownists or Independents, Socinians, Baptists, and a host of others, began to cause divisions and offences; some objecting to surplices, and some to

bishops ; and in the end most wickedly overturned for a while, though it was not permitted to them to extinguish, the English Church. These men were clearly guilty of great sin—first in their separation from a true Church ; then in the violence to which their separation led. And if separation was thus sinful and dangerous in the reign of Elizabeth, and James, and Charles, it is impossible that it should not be so now. If the separatists of those days cut themselves off, as they most certainly did, from the privileges and communion of the Church, it does not seem possible that their descendants should regain those privileges, except by again joining themselves to the Church from which their fathers sinfully separated.

We solemnly warn Dissenters, therefore, of their danger, and exhort them at once to place themselves out of it. We do not ask them to give up the doctrine of an invisible Church—nay, we exhort them to maintain it as a high and holy mystery ; but we ask them to add to that the doctrine of a visible Catholic Church. *We ask them to believe, what one would think is not very unreasonable, that it is the will of God, that those who are joined together in one common faith ought also to be joined in outward union—ought to worship God together, and partake together of the holy communion.* To set up altar against altar, and pulpit against pulpit in the same place, is palpably inconsistent with Christian charity and union, and must inevitably bring God's displeasure on those who do such things.

V. *The foregoing reasons viewed together.*

I beg the attention of Dissenters to the topic which I am now about to bring forward : it is a very import-

ant one, but one which I fear they have but little considered, if they ever heard of it.

Some Dissenters, Wesleyans for instance, say that they differ *very slightly* from the Church; and therefore, even supposing that they are wrong, they cannot imagine that there can be any danger in their differences.

First, let us consider the question, whether, as far as we know of God's laws, He does not sometimes inflict tremendous punishment for what may seem to us an error of judgment? Eve would not believe the warning of God; she ate the forbidden fruit, died. and Uzza touched the ark, which all but the priests were forbidden to touch; he did so with the good intention, as it would seem, of saving it from falling; but he was struck dead for his error. So it is under the Christian covenant. "He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned." These instances I mention to shew, that by the law of God severe punishment is wont to fall on men for what some may consider mere errors of judgment.

But that is not the main point to which I wish to direct the mind of the Dissenter, and principally the Wesleyan.

Is he sure that his error is slight? He differs from the Church in some minor points, as he believes, and separates himself from her communion. But this very separation, even in the slightest degree, may bring in its train the most awful consequences. Those who entered the ark were safe. All who remained without, *it mattered not whether at a smaller or greater distance*, were drowned. I do entreat the Dissenter to consider the possible, nay probable, consequences of separation.

It may have cut him off from the Christian sacraments. There is a great doubt whether he has ever been spiritually joined to Christ in baptism; still greater, whether he has ever spiritually eaten and drunk the body and blood of Christ. If not, he *has no spiritual life in him*; he may have been all along eating and drinking his own damnation. Hence, by natural consequence, he has no sympathy with Christ's body, the Church; yea, rather an hostility against it. Will not this account for the phenomenon, otherwise not easily explained, of the violent and unbridled wickedness to which Dissenters in times past have been led, when, beginning with apparently small disputes, about the use of surplices, and the cross in baptism, they caused a schism in the Church? Would it not seem that *thenceforth the Holy Spirit ceased to guide them*? And so they went on until they murdered their king; drove God's servants, the bishops, from the land; and trampled under foot His most holy Church. It is impossible to conceive wickedness more awful than this.

And are not Dissenters even now in danger of falling into the same excess of sin? Does not the most bitter malice against the Church corrode the hearts of some? not of all—God forbid that I should say so, or think so; yet all are liable to the same sinfulness, if deserted by God's Spirit. But in many Satan even now reigns triumphant; causing them to vilify God's holy Church; crying, "Down with it, down with it, even to the ground!" Let them thank God, who has hitherto restrained their violence.

I would entreat them to consider the question which I have just suggested, whether the bitterness and violence, which so many exhibit, may not arise

from desertion of the Holy Spirit, *in consequence of the neglect or invalid reception of those sacraments which He has ordained to be dispensed, as the continual means of grace through the instrumentality of His visible Church.*

And let those who are not conscious of any such hostility to the Church, yet live in separation from it, consider the dilemma in which they are placed. They differ from the Church for great or for small things. If for great things, for essential and fundamental points, then they are liable to the charge of heresy. If for small and non-essential things, why cause a schism? and why needlessly deprive themselves of the benefit of those sacraments and ordinances which the Church has been commissioned to administer?

It is no safe refuge for the Dissenter, that, in his separation from the Church, or in his hostility to it, he is acting, as it is erroneously termed, *conscientiously*. St. Paul conscientiously, as he thought, persecuted the Church; and some thought they did God service when they put the Apostles to death. Let the Dissenter learn from hence *unto what depths of sin it is possible for a mistakenly conscientious man to fall*; and let him not be satisfied with the approbation of his conscience, unless he has taken those various means which God has afforded to make sure *that his conscience is rightly informed*.

VI. *Objections answered.*

The usual plea of Dissenters for their separation from the Church is, that there are various imperfections in it. To this I answer, that it is not competent for a man to say, I object to this thing and that, and *therefore I will leave the Church*. He ought to try to have them amended. Those who leave the Church incur the loss

of those benefits which the Church is ordained to afford. No one says that the Church on earth is perfect: though established by God, it is administered by men, and therefore liable to error. If such errors go to great lengths—if the Church bids us do any thing plainly contrary to God's law, as to worship images, and pray to saints, then, as Hooker says, "We dare not communicate with her concerning her sundry gross and grievous abominations." "We must obey God rather than men." We must believe that God will raise up for us some way of deliverance. But I never heard of any such objections or abuses laid to the charge of the reformed branch of God's Church in England. She is purified from her former corruptions; restored, as nearly as may be, to the apostolic model; she is sound, at least in fundamentals—even Dissenters acknowledge this. Therefore, whatever may be the blemishes which are supposed to exist, or really do exist in her, yet, since she alone can shew that she has God's commission, *it is sinful and dangerous to separate from her communion.*

VII. *Who is the Dissenter's best friend?*

Such, then, being the relative position between the reformed Church and dissent, I would ask the Dissenter, *which is your real friend, the liberal, or the (so-called) bigot?* the man who plainly tells you the danger of your position, or the man who conceals from you your peril, talks of your piety and conscientiousness, and so leads you to suppose that you are neither in a state of sinfulness nor danger? Surely he who declares the truth, however unpalatable, is a better friend than he who prophesies smooth things to your destruction.

I am bound in fairness to make one important ad-

mission to Dissenters, and to confess my belief that the unfortunate and dangerous position in which they stand is, in many cases, attributable, in the first place, to the inactivity which pervaded the Church, as well as the whole nation, during a great part of the last century ; and, in the second place, to the principles which, though entirely contrary to the Church's real doctrine, have been inculcated by many of the members of the Church. There are, I am persuaded, many hundreds and thousands of well-intentioned men living in separation from the Church, in sheer ignorance of their danger ; *and this principally because God's ministers have never taught them the real truth.* The true doctrine of the unity of the Church, and the sinfulness of schism, has not been preached as it ought to have been from our pulpits. Many ministers have rather encouraged Dissenters in their delusion, by telling them that their faith is orthodox, and their differences trivial ; neglecting at the same time to teach them that there was a doubtfulness as to the validity of their sacraments, and that separation from the apostolic Church was against the laws of God. Others have contributed to the same delusion, by resting the necessity of conformity on lower principles, such as expediency, and obedience to the law of the land. And so, many persons have thought lightly of separation from what they deemed a mere national establishment, who would have remained faithful, had they been taught that the Church was Christ's own divine institution.

Let us hope that these things are now beginning to be better known and appreciated ; that the necessity of the Christian sacraments,—the essential unity of the Church,—the duty of joining ourselves, through God's appointed

means, to that which is the body of Christ,—the true nature of the Church, not as a mere human establishment, which may be put down by the same power that raised it up, but as a divine ordinance of Christ, which will continue so long as the world endureth,—let us trust that these vital doctrines will henceforth be acknowledged amongst Christians. And when the voice of long-neglected truth has once more gone forth through the land, let us entertain a firm hope that better days are in store for the Church. Superstition and heresy have in times past more fearfully prevailed against the Church, than even now she is vexed by schism. But as *they* have, through the providence of God, been dispersed, so, we doubt not, will the various sects, which now mar her beauty, again return to their holy mother, when she raises her voice in accents of warning and kindness.

Then will she send forth her missionaries and distribute the word of God with some prospect of success, when all shall speak the same thing, and “utter a certain sound.” And we may at length hope that the bright anticipations of the elder prophets may have a literal fulfilment; and that the knowledge of the truth may spread over the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

VIII. *Concluding remarks.*

I trust that these arguments will be received by the Dissenter who reads them, in the same spirit in which they have been written—in the spirit of truth and charity. It is no question of private opinion between him and me. If it were so, his opinion might be as good as mine. But it is not a personal dispute between one individual and another; it is simply a question *whether he or the apostolic Church is right.*

And, after all, I would say to the Dissenter, "What unreasonable thing is it that we propose to you?" We ask you to go with us to God's house, to take sweet counsel together, to join in our prayers and praises, to partake of our holy sacraments, to join in our communion. Our churches, our hearts are open to you. We entreat you to live with us as brethren in holy fellowship. Is this unreasonable or uncharitable on our part? Surely, if you refuse our fellowship, despise our ministers, and disdain our holy service, the want of charity rests with you.

O that we could in any way overcome this lamentable spirit of disunion, whether by calm remonstrance, or solemn argument, or acts of love! What would we not willingly do, consistent with God's law, to win you back to our fellowship, so that we might be again united as one fold under one Shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord!

It will be observed that the argument of the foregoing Tract turns on the *doubtfulness* of the validity of sacraments administered by unordained persons. That it is a doubtful point must, I think, be admitted; and being so, it appears to me most charitable to urge Dissenters, who have yet the power, to make their salvation sure, by receiving such baptism as is beyond question valid. But when a Dissenter dies, and it is no longer possible that his condition should be changed, then perhaps Christian charity might authorise even one whose opinions were most strict, to allow him the benefit of the doubtfulness, and not refuse him burial in consecrated ground. If he would

but have accepted our baptism, the difficulty would be removed ; but when he will not, we must act as our best judgment directs us.

NOTE.

Extracts from a Sermon by John Wesley, preached at Cork, May 4, 1789, and printed in the Arminian Magazine, and in Wesley's Works, vol. vii.

“ In 1744 all the Methodist preachers had their first Conference. But none of them dreamed that the being called (?) to preach gave them any right to administer the sacraments.”

“ Did we ever appoint you,” he asks, “ to administer the sacraments, to exercise the priestly office ? Such a design never entered into our mind : it was farthest from our thoughts. And if any preacher had taken such a step, we should have looked upon it as a palpable breach of this rule, and consequently as a recantation of our connexion.

“ It was several years after our society was formed before any attempt of this kind was made. The first was, I apprehend, at Norwich. One of our preachers there yielded to the importunity of a few of the people, and baptized their children. But, as soon as it was known, he was informed it must not be, unless he designed to leave our connexion. He promised to do so no more, and I suppose he kept his promise.

“ I wish all of you who are vulgarly called Methodists would seriously consider what has been said ; and particularly you whom God has commissioned to call sinners to repentance. *It does by no means follow hence*

that ye are commissioned to baptize, or administer the Lord's Supper. Ye did not then, like Kórah, Dathan, and Abiram, seek the priesthood also. Ye knew 'no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.' Contain yourselves within your own bounds. . . . I earnestly advise you, abide in your own place ; keep your own station."



Some priests, some presbyters I mean, would be
Each overseer of his several cure ;
But one superior, to oversee
Them altogether, they will not endure.

.
But who can shew of old that ever any
Presbyteries without their bishops were ?

.
However, a true bishop I esteem
The highest officer the Church on earth
Can have as proper to itself ; and deem
A Church without one an imperfect birth,
If constituted so at first ; and maimed,
If whom it had, it afterwards disclaimed.

CHRISTOPHER HERVEY.



CHAPTER XIX.

The Threefold Ministry.

IN the midst of my mingled cares and satisfactions, an unexpected opponent sprang up in the shape of the parish doctor.

Dr. Ward was a member of my own congregation; and on the strength of appearing in his pew generally once at least every Sunday, and being on friendly terms with myself, he passed for a good Churchman.

But, alas! Dr. Ward was a liberal; and it is a singular physiological phenomenon, as the Doctor would have expressed himself, that the way in which liberals are wont to shew their attachment and affection for the Church is, most commonly, by giving her as hard knocks as they are able, and invariably siding with her enemies in their attacks upon her.

Whether it was that the season was unusually healthy, and the patients consequently few, or whatever was the cause that the Doctor's time hung so loosely on his hands; the result, however, of his leisure was a rather lengthy pamphlet, in which the

Church's doctrine of a threefold ministry was very assiduously controverted.

"Well, Doctor Ward," I said one day, as we left the house of a sick person together, "so you are turned controversialist. 'Tis well to see laymen interesting themselves in religious matters, instead of maintaining the latitudinarian indifference in which too many have been absorbed. Still I am grieved that you should have thought it necessary to exercise your pen against the doctrine of the Church of which you are a member."

"Pardon me, reverend sir," said the Doctor; "I have not controverted the Church's doctrine, but merely one which is maintained by a certain section of it, who, as I hold, take far too much upon themselves. What right have any body of men to unchurch so many millions of their conscientious brother Christians, and compare their ministers to Korah, *Nathan*, and Abiram?"

I just managed to keep my countenance at this blunder of the Doctor's. It is curious, however, to observe into what mistakes persons fall, who, having passed their lives in other professions, take up religious controversy as the amusement of their leisure. I remember one gentleman who spoke of Joseph's escape from the blandishments of the *fair Potiphar*. And these are but types of other blunders of which they are guilty, without being in the least aware of them, as to the value of authorities, and the bearing of facts one on another. They are,

in truth, just such as a clergyman would fall into, if he took upon himself to write an essay on the nervous or arterial system.

Mr. L. "I think, sir, if you will do me the favour to go with me into my study, I can shew you at once that the doctrine of a threefold ministry is one maintained most decidedly by the Church of England."

Dr. Ward thereupon followed me into my library; and taking down a large quarto Prayer-book, I opened it at the beginning of the Ordination Service, from which I read as follows: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been three orders of ministers in Christ's Church, bishops, priests, and deacons."

"Stay," said Dr. Ward; "I do not remember to have read that passage—it is not in my Prayer-book."

Mr. L. "Very likely not; for I am sorry to say, that a great many Prayer-books are sadly curtailed in the printing. I saw one the other day, in which the whole preface and directions with regard to fasts and festivals were left out. So that a person unfortunate enough to possess no better Prayer-book than that, might go on all his life without being aware that such ordinances existed in our Church. However, here you have a complete Prayer-book, and may read distinctly what is the Church's doctrine contained in it."

Dr. W. "I certainly was not aware that the doctrine was so decidedly laid down in our formularies. However, I suppose that it is no heresy for a layman to object to such portions of the Church's service and formularies as he does not consider proved by holy Scripture."

Mr. L. "If it be not a fundamental doctrine of the Church universal, the denial of it does not involve the crime of heresy: laymen are certainly not bound by the letter of our English formularies in the same way that the clergy are. Ministers before their ordination declare their assent to all that is contained in the book of Common Prayer; and if their opinions should vary from it, they cannot conscientiously continue to exercise their ministerial function, or hold preferment. Laymen are not bound by any signature of the Articles, or any declaration with regard to the Church's formularies; and may, indeed *ought*, to continue to communicate with her, even though they may not discern the proof of some things therein contained."

Dr. W. "Well, then, I confess I do not agree with her in regard to the threefold ministry."

Mr. L. "Still, Dr. Ward, I think it more becoming in those lay members of the Church who do not agree with her in every point, to keep a reverent silence, and not join with the enemy in attacking their mother Church. It is an ill sound when children rail against their parents."

This did not quite accord with the liberal views of Dr. Ward. A very enlarged acceptance of the

fifth commandment, in all its analogous bearings, as regards respect due to age, authority, station, and office, is not the forte of persons of his opinion.

“However,” I resumed, “let us consider the case more particularly. The question before us is this: The Church declares that it is evident to all diligent inquirers, that there were during the Apostles’ time, and have been ever since, three orders of ministers. You, Dr. Ward, on the other hand, affirm that it is evident there were only two.”

Dr. W. “You can put it so, if you please.”

Mr. L. “Well, if there were only two originally allow me to ask at what time were three introduced? Was it at the time of the reformation?”

Dr. W. “No, certainly; the reformers of the English Church continued the three orders as they had found them.”

Mr. L. “Yes, because they believed, as they have stated in the passage which I have just read to you, that it was evident there had been three from the beginning. And I may add, that the other great reformers, Luther and Calvin, were of the same opinion, and lamented that circumstances (as they supposed) prevented the continuance of bishops in the Protestant communities, and professed their intention to restore them when it was practical. So that your opinion is decidedly different from that of all the principal reformers. However, we were inquiring at what time the threefold ministry was introduced into our Church. Was it Augustin, the converter of the

Saxons, who first introduced episcopacy into England?"

Dr. W. "No; I believe there is no doubt that he found British bishops already existing."

Mr. L. "Yes, there were bishops, indeed three orders of ministry, in Britain, as there were in the Churches of France, Italy, Asia, Africa—in short, all over the world. Now, what I want to know is, how this universal practice arose? If it was introduced by the Apostles, who founded those Churches, and 'as they went through the cities delivered them the decrees for to keep, which were ordained of the elders at Jerusalem'¹—on this supposition, which has always been considered the true one, all seems quite natural. But, on the other hand, if the Apostles, as you suppose, only established two orders, how very strange it is, that in every Church throughout the world we should find the Apostles' institution altered immediately after their departure, nay, even before their departure. Does it not appear a moral impossibility, that, if the Apostles instituted a twofold order, every Church throughout the world should with one accord have rejected the Apostles' institutions, and, contrary to their decrees, should have established an episcopate, as a separate order?"

"My dear sir," said Dr. Ward, not attempting to answer this statement, "you have mistaken the drift of my argument." The Doctor, it should be observed, was one of those gentlemen who are not

¹ Acts xvi. 4.

apt at seeing more than one side of an argument ; and having drawn their own conclusion from their own premises, consider all that make against it not worth attending to. “ My position is this,” continued he ; “ we are not bound to believe any thing which cannot be proved from Scripture ; the threefold ministry cannot be so proved, and therefore we are not bound to receive it.”

Mr. L. “ I understand you, then, to say, not that the threefold ministry is unlawful, but that it is ‘ not proven.’ ”

Dr. W. “ Exactly so ; and therefore that Dissenters have a right to establish a twofold ministry, if their conscience approves of it.”

Mr. L. “ We have not yet come to the direct scriptural proof : what I have adduced is the historical evidence, which seems to me to afford a moral proof of the doctrine of our Church, that the three orders have existed from the very time of the Apostles. Allow me, however, to ask you one question, with reference to what you have said of the right of Dissenters to have a twofold ministry if they choose—do you not understand both our Lord and His Apostles strictly to enjoin that there should be *unity* in the Church ? I need not go about, surely, to prove that ? ”

Dr. W. “ Unquestionably they recommend unity.”

Mr. L. “ Well, then, when the whole Church has adopted a threefold ministry—and a threefold ministry, as you admit, is not unlawful, but only not

proven,—is it not sinful to break the unity of the Church, and establish a twofold ministry? What is schism, if that be not schism?”

Dr. Ward made no answer to this question; in fact, there is none: unless it can be proved that episcopacy is *unlawful*, Dissenters are clearly acting schismatically in separating from a pure episcopal Church.

Mr. L. “However, to come now to the scriptural evidence of the doctrine. The Church declares that, from *holy Scripture*, and the writings of ancient fathers, it is evident that there have been since the time of the Apostles three orders of ministers; one order, whose duty was to assist the higher clergy; another order, which administered the sacraments and instructed flocks in particular places; and a third, whose peculiar function was to ordain others and govern districts or dioceses—in short, what we now call Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Now on what ground do you disagree with the Church as to this doctrine?”

Dr. W. “I shall not have to go far to prove to you, that the order of presbyters and bishops was in the Apostles’ time the same. Look here, sir, at the twentieth chapter of the Acts, 17th verse: St. Paul, being at Miletus, ‘called the elders (presbyters) of the Church;’ and having conversed with them for a time, he says: ‘Take heed unto yourselves, and to the flock over whom the Lord hath made you overseers’ (bishops). I take that, sir, to be a conclusive evidence that, in the time of the Apostles, presbyters and bishops were one and the same order.”

Mr. L. “ And do you really suppose that this passage, and others which you might mention, have been overlooked by the Church for eighteen hundred years ; and if they be really conclusive of the question, that they should not have been acknowledged to be so ? The word ‘ bishop ’ means overseer ; and no one ever disputed that the *name* was applied *at first* to those who had *oversight* of flocks or parishes. In the passage to which you have referred, St. Paul had assembled the overseers or pastors of certain congregations, and exhorts them to take heed to themselves, and to the ‘ flock ’ over whom they had been appointed. *He himself* is at the same time exercising the real office of bishop or superintendent over them. We have, therefore, in this very passage a proof of the distinction of orders. There was St. Paul, like any modern bishop, summoning the presbyters, and probably deacons, though they are not named, and delivering his charge to them.”

Dr. L. “ Nay ; but St. Peter acknowledges, in his first epistle, that the Apostles themselves were but presbyters, or elders : ‘ The elders which are amongst you, I exhort, who am myself an elder.’ Does not this prove the identity of the office ? ”

Mr. L. “ You seem to me, my dear sir, to have fallen here into a fallacy,—you are proving what no one ever doubted—that *all bishops are presbyters*. But what you have to prove, in order to establish your argument, is, that *all presbyters are bishops*—that all presbyters have received authority to perform

episcopal functions. *The office of presbyter is to administer the sacraments and preach the Gospel*; and every bishop retains authority to exercise those functions after he has been made a bishop. *The distinctive office of bishops is to ordain ministers and govern the Church*; and no priest has authority to exercise those functions, until he has been solemnly commissioned so to do, and made a bishop. Of this distinction of office, abundant evidence occurs in holy Scripture. The Apostles, we know, wherever they founded Churches, ordained in them elders, or presbyters, or pastors, or overseers—for they are called by all these names—and, at the first, overlooked them themselves. Afterwards, as the Church increased, they delegated to others the power of ordaining, and overlooking the Churches. Thus St. Paul left Titus in Crete, that he might set in order the things that were wanting, and ordain elders in every city.¹ Do you suppose that the other elders in Crete had a like authority to ordain and set things in order? No, surely; they had received no such commission: they would have been interfering with the episcopal office of Titus. Again; St. Paul warns him that there were unruly and vain talkers, whose mouths were to be stopped.² But supposing them to be presbyters, as perhaps they were, you do not mean to say that they had an equal right to stop the mouth of Titus, as he theirs? St. Timothy, again, was desired to abide at Ephesus, that he might

¹ Titus i. 5.² Ver. 10.

charge the teachers there that they taught no other doctrine but the true one.¹ Do you suppose that the presbyters there had the same authority to charge St. Timothy? He was to receive accusation against elders.² Were *they* also competent to receive accusation against *him*? He was to lay hands suddenly on no man.³ Had the other elders a like commission? Certainly not. He, like Titus, had received an authority quite distinct from that of the other presbyters; namely, the authority which is now exercised by our bishops. Read only the epistles to Titus and Timothy, particularly the first to Timothy, and say whether those two holy men did not receive from St. Paul a commission beyond and superior to that of ordinary priests. Then turn to the Revelation of St. John, and you will find the system of the episcopate by that time fully established, and a regular bishop, under the name of 'angel,' established in each of the great cities. The line of evidence is continued in the first Christian writers; and, as if the title of Apostle was too hallowed and holy to be continued to any besides those who had conversed with our Lord in the days of His flesh, or had been miraculously called by Him, the name of 'bishop' soon became exclusively used to denote the office of those who had been raised above the priesthood, to exercise superior functions, especially to ordain, confirm, and take oversight of the Church. In short, my dear sir, if you will dili-

¹ 1 Tim. i. 3.² 1 Tim. v. 19.³ Ver. 22.

gently read the holy Scriptures and the works of ancient fathers, you will, I am sure, be convinced of the truth of the declaration of the Church, that the three distinct orders have been established from the beginning, which we now have in our Church under the name of bishops, priests, and deacons."

The Doctor not immediately answering to this argument, I continued: "You must allow me, my dear sir, to say, that I think you have gone beyond your function, in publishing opinions against the doctrines of the Church to which you belong. I remember, some while ago, when the cholera was anticipated, you put out a very able and well-timed bill of instructions respecting the cautions necessary to be observed by the healthy, and the steps to be taken by such as found themselves infected. You would have been rather surprised, I imagine, and have thought it somewhat presumptuous, if I, or my curate, had published a counter-statement, and persuaded the people that there was no danger or need of precaution. Have not I, your pastor, an equal right to complain of you, for putting forth statements contrary to those which I teach from the pulpit, on the authority of the Church of which I am a minister? You are a member of the Church of England, and profess yourself 'deeply impressed with the advantages of episcopal government;' and yet you publish a pamphlet, the object of which is to prove that the Church's doctrine respecting the episcopate is not according to Scripture. Consider

what will be the effect of your pamphlet, if it have any, on the people of this place. Its effect will be to confirm Dissenters in their errors, and unsettle the minds of Churchmen. I must say, I think, if any such result should occur, a heavy charge will lie at your door; and you will have incurred the guilt of those who cause schism in the Church, remove their neighbours' landmarks, and cause the blind to go out of their way. The best thing which can happen to you will be, that your pamphlet may fall unheeded to the ground, and God may forgive your error."

These words had considerable effect on the Doctor, for he was a serious and well-meaning man at bottom. He shook hands with me, and promised to think more of the matter: and so he did. I happened to be at the bookseller's soon after; and seeing none of Dr. Ward's pamphlets on the table, I asked him if they were all sold; but received information that the Doctor had quietly withdrawn them,—which was perhaps the best thing he could have done.



The deacon
Loves not to vary, when he sees
 No great necessity ;
To what's commanded he agrees,
 With all humility :
Knowing how highly God submission prizes,—
Pleased with obedience more than sacrifices.
 CHRISTOPHER HARVEY.



CHAPTER XX.

The young Curate.

NOT very long after my arrival at High Kirkstall, and when all things were going on satisfactorily, I lost a very excellent curate, who had been of essential service in the parish ; but as the cause of his removal was an appointment to a living, I could not but feel happy at his preferment. I found, however, great difficulty in supplying his place. It has been stated, I believe on good authority, that the number of young clergy ordained is smaller than what are required to supply the annual deaths. When, in addition to the ordinary demand, we take into consideration the new churches built from time to time, very serious apprehension arises whether a sufficient number of clergymen will be found to supply the wants of the Church. The fact is, that the endowments are so small, the labour in many cases so overwhelming, the prospect of honour and emolument so much reduced by the late Cathedral Act, that parents who desire to place their sons in a respectable profession, where they may get an honest living, will no longer

educate them for the Church. Unless, therefore, an enthusiasm, or zeal for the ministry, can be called forth, independent of professional prospects, it is much to be feared that either labourers will be wanting in the vineyard, or that they will gradually deteriorate in point of education and ability.

After a good deal of inquiry and difficulty, I at length heard of a curate who seemed likely to suit me, being strongly recommended for learning and piety, though hitherto he had not been employed beyond the walls of his college. On the arrival of Mr. Monkton, I was pleased with his manner and conversation. He was evidently well read,—possessed, indeed, of much more information than most young men of his age; a little too fond, as it struck me, of bringing his learning forward—but that, perhaps, was to have been expected in one who had but just emerged from the common room. His mind was also evidently devoted to his sacred office, and imbued with a deep interest for all things connected with it. I certainly augured well from the first interview, and hoped that he would prove a valuable aid to me in the ministry. The only thing which I did not like was his dress, which consisted of a very long coat, or cassock, hanging down to his heels, with a straight upright collar, and a row of buttons up the front, after the fashion of a Roman Catholic priest. Certainly I would infinitely rather have seen him wear such a dress, than that of the dandy young clergymen whom one sometimes meets,

with black or coloured stocks, chains on their waist-coats, smart-fitting boots, and coats in the newest fashion. Mr. Monkton's fault was all on the right side. Still I would have preferred that he had avoided unnecessary peculiarity, and kept to the decent and grave costume which respectable clergymen generally wear. Whatever may be the merit of the abstract question as to the propriety of the clergy wearing a distinctive dress, any change should come from the recommendation of our superiors.

However, this was not the only peculiarity of my new curate. When he began to officiate in the church, he exhibited a more than usual appearance of devotion in his manner. He invariably bowed at the name of Jesus; and on entering the church, or repeating the creed, or approaching the east end, he would bow towards the altar, and cross his breast.¹

These proceedings, of course, attracted the attention of the congregation; and I could observe that many of them, instead of attending to what they were about, were watching Mr. Monkton. Several also, amongst the most respectable members of the congregation, made serious objections to some of these

¹ I have had some doubts as to the propriety of introducing circumstances which may seem to point attention to a particular individual. But they have been over-ruled by the consideration, that the value of such statements as I have made in this book depends on their not being exaggerations or caricatures, but as near as possible to real facts. Nor do I see any reason why facts may not be stated in a volume like this, which would have been properly brought forward in a pamphlet or a review.

peculiarities. It was evident to me, therefore, that it was my duty to remonstrate with him.

"My dear sir," I said, as we left the church together, "it is right, in the relation in which we stand to each other, that there should be no reserve or restraint between us; and I trust you will not feel annoyed if I advert to any part of your conduct which may seem to me to need correction."

"I beg," said Mr. Monkton, "that you will never scruple to inform me of any thing which is amiss; and if I can conscientiously do so, you may depend on my altering it."

Mr. L. "Well, then, since you are disposed to receive my remarks with so much candour, I must say that objection has been made—and I think with justice—to some part of your conduct in church."

Mr. M. "Ah! I know to what you allude, sir. But surely you do not object to any acts betokening reverence. When one looks around, and sees the lamentable apathy generally observable in a congregation—some staring about them, others lolling in their pews instead of reverently kneeling, and their disregard for the Sacred Presence in which they are assembled,—surely any the slightest action which tends to remind them, or indeed oneself, of the awful majesty of Him in whose house we are, must be not only not objectionable, but most desirable."

Mr. L. "I go along with you, my good friend, in all you can say on the propriety, or rather the necessity, not only of the inward spirit, but of outward

forms of reverence. Speaking abstractedly, the slightest indication of so good a feeling is desirable. For this cause, I like to see my congregation turn to the east, in the good old fashion,¹ when they say the creed; and often wonder at two or three persons in the church, who go out of their way to behave differently to the rest of the congregation, by standing immovably like stocks, or looking their neighbours in the face, as much as to say, 'How much better I know how I ought to behave than you!' This affectation of want of reverence is much worse than affectation of the contrary; and if one must do differently from other people, it is better to err on the side of reverence. Do not think, therefore, that I disagree with you in principle. The question is simply with regard to the propriety of particular acts. As to bowing at the name of Jesus, I quite approve of it. We teach it our school-children: why not practise it ourselves? Indeed, a good many

¹ The reason of turning to the east at the Creed appears to be this: We ought *always* to turn to the east, if we followed the ancient practice of the Church; but, in the present incongruous arrangement of the pews in many of our churches, it is impossible to do so when kneeling. When, however, we stand, as we do at the Creed, all may turn without inconvenience; and a very reverent appearance it surely has. The reason of bowing the head at the name of Jesus in the Creed is founded on the text, "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow." When we are actually kneeling, it does not seem necessary to bow; kneeling being an action of lowlier reverence than merely bowing.

of the more respectable amongst the older members of the congregation retain the habit; and I should like to see it become more general. With regard to bowing towards the altar, also, you are kept in countenance by many of the congregation, especially some from the country, who retain the reverent custom of bowing as they come up the church. It is the practice, I believe, of the dean and chapter at some of our cathedrals. Why should it be thought improper or unnecessary to use in God's house the same mark of respect which we scruple not to adopt in the presence of royalty? But to come to the point, the part of your behaviour to which objections have been made—and, I think, not without reason—is your open use of the sign of the cross."

Mr. M. "Indeed, sir!" said Mr. Monkton, apparently surprised. "What objection can there possibly be to that holy emblem which typifies our salvation? How can it be wrong for men, who are to know nothing save Christ and Him crucified—men whose only hope is in the cross of Christ,—to remind themselves continually of His precious sufferings and death? Surely those who object cannot be aware that the early Christians continually used the sign of the cross, and saw it in every thing: the mast of a ship, with its cross-beam; the extended arms in the figure of the human body; the very hilts of their swords; all appeared to them so many types and memorials of our salvation."

Mr. L. "I am quite aware," I replied, "that the

practice is sanctioned by the almost universal custom of the early Church; and I admit, that in itself it is most pious and edifying. Still we all know that it has come to be associated in the minds of the people with the superstitions of Romanism; and our Protestant congregations are very jealous of any thing which appears connected with those exploded errors."

Mr. M. "Surely, sir, the abuse of a good thing is no argument against its use."

Mr. L. "In *essentials* I grant you that this rule is sound. However much the Romanists may have abused the sacraments, the priesthood, or any thing else essential to the Church, we must not, on that account, discontinue them. But the sign of the cross is not a point of necessary duty: it is simply useful as conducing to edification; and if, as it is most certain, people are distracted in their devotions, and scandalised by what appears to them, it may be in their ignorance, a relic of popery, we are bound, for the sake of our weaker brethren, to abstain. I trust, therefore, my dear sir, that you will comply with my wishes in this respect."

My curate, though with somewhat of evident reluctance, promised that, at my request, he would give up the practice, which he accordingly did: and I was in hopes that things would have gone on very well; for he was diligent in his duty, and otherwise well disposed.

Some while after, I had occasion to be absent

from home ; and on my return, being at my accustomed place at the altar, what was my surprise, when Mr. Monkton bowed his head on entering from the vestry, to see that he had shaved the hair from the top of his crown—in short, had adopted a regular tonsure!

“ Well, this is too bad !” said I to myself, half angry, half laughing. I am sorry to say, I could not get rid of the thought even during the service. The thing took me by surprise, and I could not drive it from my mind, so as to attend to my devotions ; and I have no doubt that the same effect was wrought in my congregation by Mr. Monkton’s new eccentricity.

However, the worst was yet to come. On entering the vestry, I made no observation to my curate, not wishing to discuss the matter in the presence of the clerk. As soon as Mr. Monkton left the vestry, the old clerk began :

“ Well, that’s a strange gentleman, to be sure. The people don’t half like his ways. I suppose, sir, you have not seen the churchwardens since you came home. But they want to speak to you about what happened on Thursday last at the communion ”—for I had a communion on every festival.

“ No ; I have not seen them, Simon. What was it that took place ?”

“ Why, sir, Mr. Monkton would not use the bread which was there, but brought a number of little wafers which he had had made at his lodgings.

Some of the people who went up to the rail would not take them, but came away without communicating. I do not know what you will think of it, sir ; but the parish is all up in arms about it."

"No wonder," I said ; "I must look to this matter without delay."

On getting home to my house, the first thing I did was to turn to the rubric in the Communion Service, in which I had imagined that it was strictly ordered that common wheaten bread was to be used. But this was not the case : had it been so, I felt much inclined to have presented my curate to the Bishop. But the words were these : "To take away all occasion of dissension and superstition which any person hath or might have concerning the bread and wine, *it shall suffice* that the bread be such as is usual to be eaten ; but the best and purest wheat bread that conveniently may be gotten." Now, in this rubric it is not stated that it *must* be wheaten bread. Indeed, it seems to be implied that wafers continued to be commonly used, as had been the custom before the reformation ; and therefore I could not accuse him of any positive violation of the rubric. Still, the revival of a custom long since exploded, at the certain risk of giving needless offence, seemed to me an unpardonable act of indiscretion, or, perhaps it might be termed, irreverent affectation. At any rate, it appeared to me that Mr. Monkton was not the sort of person with whom

I could continue to act with any degree of satisfaction; and therefore I wrote at once the following letter:—

“DEAR SIR,

“From your compliance with my request respecting the use of the sign of the cross, I entertained hopes that I should have been enabled to profit for a continuance by your ability and diligence in my parish; but the information which I have received since my return home, and what I have myself had occasion to observe, prevents me from any longer indulging that hope. That you should think fit to shave your head, intending it, I suppose, in imitation of the Romish tonsure, would appear rather a subject of ridicule than of grave animadversion, were it not that things of this trifling nature often prove a greater stumbling-block in the path of the simple-minded than more grave delinquency. On this subject, however, I will not dwell; but that on so solemn an occasion as the celebration of the holy eucharist, you should, of your own accord, make an innovation in the usual practice, which must needs give offence to many pious communicants, certainly appears to me most reprehensible. I do not accuse you of having done any thing absolutely contrary to the letter of any canon or rubric; but your want of consideration, as regards the feelings of your flock, and the impropriety of so young a man introducing unauthorised changes, appear to me so glaring, that I fear I shall find it impossible to avail myself in future of your assistance in this parish; and therefore, from this day, it is my intention to perform the duties entirely myself, until I can

obtain the assistance of a curate whose sentiments and notions of propriety are more congenial with my own.

“Your faithful servant,
“BERNARD LESLIE.”

No sooner had I despatched this letter than I began to relent, and think that I had acted rather too harshly. Mr. Monkton was, beyond question, a conscientious, able, and learned minister, and capable, if rightly managed, of being of great service to the Church; but if he were harshly dealt with, it was impossible to say what step he might take. I accordingly doubted whether it was not my duty to reason with him, and endeavour to convince him that he was acting on some wrong principle. I therefore took my hat, and walked to his lodgings. Mr. Monkton was in his study, with my letter open before him; and I fancied that I could see traces of tears in his eyes: certainly he looked sorrowful rather than indignant, which of course operated with me in his favour, as it argued a right feeling and humble spirit.

Mr. L. “You will see from my letter, Mr. Monkton, that I have been exceedingly hurt and annoyed by your conduct. It has, however, occurred to me that it was my duty to come in person, and remonstrate with you. It cannot be supposed that a man of your ability should really attach importance to such matters as the shaving your head, and so forth, unless under the influence of some theory with which they appear to you connected.”

B B

Mr. M. "My theory is this, sir—that all usages of catholic antiquity are to be retained with reverence. In our own Church unfortunately, owing to certain prejudices which had their origin at the reformation, many catholic customs have been discontinued, though, as I conceive, not condemned or forbidden. One principal inducement with me to accept the curacy of High Kirkstall was, because I imagined that I was about to act under a gentleman who was well aware of the practical deficiencies which exist in our branch of the Church catholic; and was prepared to sanction the revival of ancient customs, as far as they could be made to come within the exact letter of those rubrics by which we are bound."

Mr. L. "Mr. Monkton, I wish to discuss this matter fairly with you, and am glad you have thus plainly stated the principles of your conduct; which, however, I trust I shall be able to prove to you are not such as can be safely acted on, or else are not applicable as you imagine. In the first place, I cannot say that I approve of the principle of adopting innovations without the sanction of our superiors, or reviving obsolete customs, which are not essential in themselves, because they are not strictly forbidden. We must, in charity, consider the prejudices of our people, and not risk offending them in matters such as these. The requirements of the Gospel are in themselves a sufficient stumbling-block to poor human nature, without our adding other causes of offence by our caprice or indiscretion. I thought we had un-

derstood each other in a former conversation on this subject. But it appears to me that you have also made a mistake as to matters of fact. You suppose things to be catholic usages, which are not really so. Catholic customs are such as have been adopted by the universal Church from the beginning: as, for instance, the keeping holy the Lord's day, and probably the form of ordination and of administering the sacraments. But the use of the wafer in the place of bread is certainly a subsequent innovation; and so, I have no doubt, is the tonsure. St. Jerome, in commenting on Ezekiel xliv. 20, seems to shew that the priests in his time did not use 'tonsures' any more than 'love-locks.' In truth, all affectation in God's ministers is out of place; whether it be seen in the young preacher who displays himself in the pulpit with his hair frizzled out like a hair-dresser's apprentice, or in him who affects a superior knowledge or holiness by adopting the obsolete fashion of any portion or age of the Church. At any rate, it is certain, that what you consider a catholic custom is a mere modern invention, and no more necessary to be observed, even on your own principle, than the innovations of more recent sectarians."

These observations appeared to have considerable weight with Mr. Monkton. And I improved the opportunity by shewing him, in a lengthened conversation, which it is not necessary to detail, that all essential catholic practices were retained in our own Church; and that it was our duty, as ministers

of the Anglican Church, to conform to her customs and usages. In particular, I spoke very strongly, as I had done in my letter, on the impropriety, nay, sinfulness, of scandalising, by any unauthorised or unusual practice, pious persons presenting themselves at so solemn an ordinance as the holy eucharist. I remonstrated in such a manner on the subject, that Mr. Monkton confessed he had been guilty of a great sin, for which he must crave God's pardon.

Thus, by a mixture of kindness and severity, I succeeded in convincing my young friend of his errors, and winning him over to a more sober and rational course: the consequence of which was, that I retained him in his curacy; and, so far from having had cause to repent, I do not think there is a more diligent and conscientious clergyman in the diocese. Had Mr. Monkton been arrogant and conceited, he would, no doubt, have set himself obstinately against all advice and authority, and perhaps have become a schismatic; but, fortunately for both of us, he was one of those who, though they may be led astray by the ardour of their disposition, or be beguiled by some false theory or fantastical notion, are blessed with humble and kindly dispositions, and a conscientious desire to do, by God's aid, what is right.

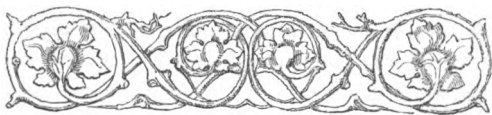
As regards the "traditions and ceremonies" adopted by the Church of England, it is of course open to every one to form his own opinion. One may think them too scanty; another, it is possible, may consider

them excessive. Still, whatever may be our private opinion, it is not right for us to vary from them, either in the way of addition or diminution. What we have to do is, to use them reverently, and induce our congregation to profit by them. When the Church has advanced to any thing like a due observance of the ordinances which she enjoys, it may be time for its heads to consider whether any advance may be made in the solemnities of God's worship. But until such an alteration comes from authority, it is our duty to conform strictly to what is enjoined, and humbly thank God for what He has given us.



**Shun the insidious arts
That Rome provides ; less dreading from her frown
Than from her wily praise.**

WORDSWORTH.



CHAPTER XXI.

Tendency to Popery.

MY readers will have observed, that since the time of my first becoming a minister of the Church, a very considerable change in my sentiments and mode of action had taken place. I am not aware of any cause, except the unbiassed conviction of my reason, and the impulse of a pure feeling, to which my change could be attributed. There was no interest or undue influence present: on the contrary, when a young minister, I had been rather biassed towards the evangelical party, from observing the superior zeal which, *at that time*, they seemed to possess; and I should certainly have become one of them, had I not been convinced, by diligent inquiry, of the unsoundness and defectiveness of their system. But from the first moment when the high-Church views were presented to my mind, I felt myself impelled towards them by an irresistible conviction, to check which would have seemed to me nothing less than the resistance of divine grace.

The same change of opinion, or rather awaken-

ment to truth, which took place within myself, I discovered was going on elsewhere. Church-principles were starting up in every quarter : I found sympathy every where. Nay, even amongst those who most set themselves against them, there was an unwilling acknowledgment, that in some points forgotten truth had been revived. I question whether there was a clergyman, from Berwick on Tweed to the Land's End, in whom some modification of view had not taken place.

The Tract-writers disclaim being the originators of this movement. The evangelicals also assert that Church-principles were reviving under their auspices. If the all-but-accomplished triumph of dissent and radicalism in evangelical times be a proof of the revival of Church-principles, the evangelicals may be right ; for it was to this state that England was reduced when the Tracts first appeared. And I cannot but attribute the favourable reaction in the nation's mind mainly to their influence. It was the great ability of these writings—the depth and fervour—the uncompromising tone of truth—their boldness, even to the extent of paradox—which carried with them the honest feeling of the reading public. They were scoffed at by the liberals in parliament ; attacked as fanatics by the radical press ; nay, even assailed by the pretended friends of order and government. Still, gradually they made their way—they infused themselves into the literature of the day, and ingrained themselves into the national mind.

Every fresh controversy in which the Tract-writers engaged was of advantage to them; for even if, as in some instances, they were wrong, yet the controversy itself drew public attention to their writings; and particular errors were little heeded, in comparison with the depth and truth of their general principles.

The tangible effects of their doctrines are manifold. The first great check which the democratic principle received came from them. The great movement in favour of religious education is mainly attributable to their principles and exertion. To them we are indebted for the successful resistance to dissent at home, and for the recent extension of the Church abroad by the appointment of colonial Bishops. Perhaps other parties may divide with them the merit of the impulse given to Church-building, though I question whether such effectual and heart-stirring appeals have been made from any other quarter, or the true principles of Church-extension by any others so strongly set forth;¹ and to come to minor, but not unessential matters, the revival of a taste for ecclesiastical architecture, and the energy now exhibited in building churches worthy of the days of our forefathers, are all attributable to the religious impulse which they have communicated.

¹ See especially Dr. Pusey's letter to the Bishop of London; and a more recent sermon, by the same author, preached at Bristol.

To look for perfection, however, in any body of men, is unreasonable; and still more so to expect an entire coincidence with one's own views, when both are liable to error. I have not been surprised, therefore, at meeting with many things in these writings with which I could not agree. The very first Tract which I read contained a passage that seemed to me not exactly in accordance with our formularies; and I have since met with what have appeared to me similar discrepancies. And even when the Tract-writers themselves have adhered to sound doctrine, and brought defective practice back to its accordance with what our Church enjoins, their followers have too often departed from the true path of moderation. In particular, it seems to me, that in some there is a sort of puerile venturousness who shall go nearest popery—as when boys dare each other which shall leave the solid ground and venture on the treacherous ice. In such cases we cannot be surprised if those who leave the safe position of the English Church should incur grievous danger or injury, nor that their indiscretion should give the enemy of Church-principles occasion for triumph. Yet such triumph is surely without cause, and tells nothing against the soundness of Church-principles, any more than the breaking of the ice would prove that the bank itself was faulty.

Soon after my conversation with Mr. Monkton, recorded in the last chapter, my friend Mr. Man-

waring being with me at my house, it happened that I received a visit from Mr. Watts Flavel. This gentleman and I had always continued on very friendly terms, notwithstanding our differences of opinion; and not unfrequently engaged in amicable conferences, perhaps not altogether without advantage. I am inclined, however, to suspect that I was indebted for his visit at this particular time, not entirely to his friendship, but partly to a very natural disposition to enjoy a little triumph at my expense, from which a man of more delicate feeling would have refrained.

“Well,” said he, soon after his arrival, “so I hear you have got a new curate—a fantastic sort of gentleman, I understand. So he must needs shave his crown! You must admit there was some *wrong-headedness* there,—ha, ha, ha! (Mr. Flavel was rather fond of a joke.) I wonder what we shall come to next! However, do not say that I did not give you fair warning what these Oxford Tracts would lead to. You are convinced now, I trust, that I was right.”

Mr. L. “Indeed, sir, I am not at all convinced of any very great evil which has resulted from them;—at least in comparison with the good they have done. Did it never occur to *you* to have a young curate whose habits and notions did not at first exactly coincide with your own? (I happened to know that this had been the case more than once. In fact, one of Mr. Flavel’s curates had been dismissed by

the bishop, for persisting in his refusal to administer the Baptismal Service according to the order prescribed in the Prayer-book.) I have come to a full understanding, I am happy to say, with Mr. Monkton; and will add, that now he has given up one or two peculiarities, I could not desire a more zealous or excellent assistant."

Mr. F. "Well, you have but neighbour's fare. The same sort of fantastic proceedings are going on all over the country. There is a clergyman at — who has the bread and wine brought in by the curate just before the prayer for the Church militant; and, after the communion, covers up what remains, in a most papistical manner, with a linen cloth."¹

Mr. L. "I am surprised that you or any one else should object to this, or express wonder about it. It is the common practice almost every where. I scarcely remember to have been present when it was omitted. At any rate, it is no innovation." (And I shewed him the rubrics in the Communion Service, in which this mode of proceeding is expressly ordered.)

Mr. F. "I must say, it appears to me a very unnecessary piece of formality. However, I will give you another instance of conformity to the rubric. A lady of my acquaintance was at — chapel in London; and what do you think she saw on the communion-table?"

¹ It will scarcely be believed, though it is a fact, that this and the following objections are what have really been made.

Mr. L. "What?"

Mr. F. "Why, a crucifix and two missals!"

Mr. L. "Nay, nay, my good sir; you have been misinformed as to the fact. I was there myself not a fortnight ago; and can assure you that what your informant calls a crucifix was a plain cross, without any image on it whatever; and what she supposes to have been two missals, were—a Bible and Prayer-book!"

This rather disconcerted Mr. Flavel. However, he returned to the charge.

Mr. F. "Well, what do you say to a neighbour of ours, who only a few Sundays ago preached—yes, actually preached—from the altar?"

"Pray allow me to ask," said Mr. Manwaring, "where this circumstance took place?"

Mr. F. "Why, not a hundred miles from your own parish."

Mr. M. "I suspected so, when I heard you mention the circumstance: however, perhaps I can explain it to your satisfaction. The fact is, that the rain poured in through the roof in such a manner, that my neighbour, poor Mr. B——, was actually driven out of the reading-desk and pulpit, to his great annoyance."

Mr. F. "Oh, certainly, in that case perhaps it was unavoidable. But, to go on with my catalogue, what think you of a clergyman who has taught his school-children to sing Latin hymns?"

Mr. L. "I saw in the papers that something of

the sort took place in one of the churches at L——. But the clergyman at that church is any thing rather than a follower of the Oxford Tracts : in fact, he is a notorious Evangelical."

Mr. F. "We must not too easily trust to mere newspaper-reports," said Mr. Flavel. "Depend on it the report is altogether false, or admits of very easy explanation."

Mr. L. "I am quite disposed to agree with you in your charitable view of the case. Only I hope the benefit may be extended to clergy of the high-Church party, as well as to Evangelicals ; and that the idle reports and exaggerated statements, so freely circulated respecting them, will be received with the same caution."

What astonished me very much, in the foregoing conversation with Mr. Flavel, was, the pertinacity with which he brought forward fact after fact ; and the little shame with which he heard that they had no foundation. He seemed almost sorry to discover that he had been misinformed, and to think that, if the parties of whom he spoke had not done all these things, they ought, at any rate, to have done them, according to their principles. Mr. Flavel was not a dishonest person—at least, not consciously so ; but so enveloped in a cloud of prejudice, and so bigoted to the views entertained by his party, that his understanding was closed against the strongest facts and proofs which made against him. No one is so impracticable as a man of this description.

Prove to him that what he asserts is positively contrary to Scripture, and he will still find some loophole to escape. He has made an idol of Evangelicalism, and considers those who do not worship it, like himself, to be lost in spiritual blindness.

No doubt many of the ablest of the Evangelicals have greatly modified their views, or even come round to Church-principles. And we shall see, in the following conversation, that even Mr. Flavel himself was not altogether proof against their influence, though little disposed to acknowledge the obligation.



**" Thus far, and no farther," when addressed
To the wild wave, or wilder human breast,
Implies authority that never can,
That never ought, to be the lot of man.**

COWPER.



CHAPTER XXII.

The later Tracts for the Times.

THERE was a short pause in the conversation, which was again broken by Mr. Flavel.

“I thought,” said he, “that you and your friend Mr. Manwaring had rather cooled in your admiration of the Oxford Tract-writers, and were not disposed to defend them quite so warmly as he, at least, did on a former occasion.”

“Nothing,” said Mr. Manwaring, “except their actually joining the Romish communion,—which, after their explicit declarations,¹ and indeed the ge-

¹ Let the following extract from Mr. Newman’s “Lectures on Romanism and Popular Protestantism,” suffice as a specimen:—“Viewed in its formal principles and authoritative statements, it professes to be the champion of past times; viewed as an active and political power, as a ruling, grasping, ambitious principle—in a word, what is expressively called *popery*—it exalts the will and pleasure of the existing Church above all authority, whether of Scripture or antiquity, interpreting the one, and disposing of the other, by its absolute and arbitrary decree.

“We must take and deal with things as they are, not as they pretend to be. If we are induced to believe the profes-

neral tenour of their writings, I conceive to be as unlikely as that the Archbishop of Canterbury himself should become a papist,—nothing short of this shall ever induce me to retract my fixed opinion, that the Tract-writers (taking their writings as a whole) are the ablest and truest maintainers which our Church has had for many years. They have raised the tone of feeling in the Church and country, and have revived principles and doctrines respecting the Church, for which I think that even you, Mr. Flavel, will acknowledge that they have done good service.”

Mr. F. “Why, in what they have brought forward as to the dignity of the ministerial office, the duty of keeping to the discipline of the established Church, and the impropriety of dissent, I agree with you, that what they have written has been of some use. The dissenters have certainly gone of late to unwarrantable lengths.”

It should be observed, that Mr. Flavel had found himself quite unable to manage the dissenters in his parish; and had recently had a controversy with the
 sions of Rome, and make advances towards her, as if a sister or a mother Church, which in theory she is, we shall find, too late, that we are in the arms of a pitiless and unnatural relative, *who will but triumph in the arts which have inveigled us within her reach.* No; dismissing the dreams which the romance of early Church-history and the high theory of Catholicism will raise in the guileless and inexperienced mind, let us be sure that *she is our enemy, and will do us a mischief when she can.*”—P. 100.

Independent minister, against whom he was glad to avail himself of the aid of high-Church doctrines, when others had failed him, as they necessarily would do.

“But then,” continued he, “the Church would have righted herself without the aid of these Oxford men, who have only marred the good work.”

“There I cannot at all agree with you,” said Mr. Manwaring: “the credit of restoring Church-principles is due, under Divine Providence, to them almost exclusively, or, at least, far more than to any other individuals.”

Mr. F. “But what a mass of trumpery they have brought in with their Church-principles! many of their doctrines and practices are little short of rank popery. What business have they to appoint a service for Bishop Ken’s day?”

Mr. M. “I am not prepared to adopt all the doctrines or practices of the Tract-writers—indeed, there are some which I regret should have been brought forward; but it is not in human nature to keep exactly to the right mark. We all more or less overshoot or come short of it; especially men of their ardent mind, embarked in a great cause, might have been expected to go beyond what more sober-minded persons would deem correct. It should, however, be remembered that, to a generation which has fallen into the disuse or forgetfulness of particular doctrines, the revivers of those doctrines will, of necessity, appear more venturous than they really are,

I agree with you in regretting that they should have published the service you allude to. Not that Christians may not religiously keep particular days in honour of their departed friends, or of eminent and excellent members of the Church. No one would dispute, I should think, that it is quite consistent with the conduct of a good Christian to do so. And I must say, that those persons who religiously keep all the festivals of the Church, and Bishop Ken's day into the bargain, are nearer the right mark than those who keep no festivals at all."

Mr. Flavel did not venture to contradict this position; but shifted his attack to the subject of fasting.

Mr. F. "I am told that some young clergymen of the Oxford school actually fast so much that they cannot get through their service; and that one lady has positively killed herself by inches."

Mr. M. "I am surprised, sir, that you do not perceive that such cases as these can form no legitimate ground of objection against the practice itself. If I preach on the duty of charity, would it be just to blame me, if some person were to give away much more than he ought? So, if the Tract-writers recommend the duty of fasting—a duty enjoined in Scripture, and prescribed for appointed seasons by the Church—a duty sanctioned by the example of the holiest men, and of our Lord Himself,—surely no just accusation can be brought against the advocates of this precept, if some who hear them should fast excessively. I quite agree with you in thinking those

persons blameable who fast to the injury of their health, or so as to interfere with the right performance of their duty ; but it is unreasonable to allege such cases as these,—if any such exist, which I rather doubt,—as objections to the duty of ‘ using such abstinence, that, our flesh being subdued to the spirit, we may obey the godly motions of the Divine grace, in righteousness and true holiness.’¹ Surely, it is not judicious to bring forward the cases which you have mentioned, in such a manner as to furnish excuse to lukewarm persons for the entire omission of this salutary means of grace.”

“ You have plenty of excuses in store for your friends,” said Mr. Flavel (not in the least acknowledging the injustice of his mode of attack) ; “ I trust, however, that you are not so far gone in Pus,—I mean Tractarianism,—as to approve of that Tract in which they recommend that the great doctrine of the atonement should be kept back from the people ? ”

Mr. M. “ What Tract do you allude to ? ”

Mr. F. “ I really cannot tell the number ; but you will know it by the description.”

Mr. M. “ I suppose you mean that on ‘ Reserve in communicating Religious Knowledge.’ ”

Mr. F. “ Exactly.”

Mr. M. “ That is a very different thing from *keeping back from the people the doctrine of the atonement*. However, I confess I do not quite like the

¹ See the Collect for the first Sunday in Lent.

title of the Tract, as it is open to misinterpretation; and, in fact, is inconsistent with the practice of the writers themselves; for, so far from 'exercising any 'reserve in communicating religious knowledge,' it would be difficult to mention any set of men who dealt forth religious knowledge in such lavish profusion."

Mr. F. "Well, that is not to the purpose. I maintain that they have no right to keep back from the people the great doctrine of the atonement."

Mr. M. "I am not aware that they advocate any such procedure,—at least, in the sense of withholding or suppressing that great doctrine. When an English man-of-war *reserves* its broadside, it is not in order to withhold it, but to give it with more effect when the proper time arrives. If they mean any such thing as concealment, I, for one, do not agree with them. But if they mean, that it is not to be blurted out in a rude, offensive manner, but spoken with a reverence and discretion corresponding with its holiness, I think their view is important. And I cannot but think that you of the evangelical party do in practice keep back the doctrine of the atonement."

Mr. F. "How so?"

Mr. M. "By your sparing use of the holy Eucharist, in which the Lord's death is manifestly set forth. I would also instance your superstitious horror of the cross, which to every sincere Christian at once recalls the atonement."

Mr. F. "But we do so on account of the superstitious uses to which it has been turned."

Mr. M. "Well, if it be so, and there still is the same danger, that is a very good reason. All I say is, that in so doing you exercise reserve. After all, my dear sir, I do not think there is any difference, of *opinion* at least, between us. You do not think that the atonement ought to be brought forward irreverently and coarsely?"

Mr. F. "Certainly not."

Mr. M. "You do not think it should be brought forward so prominently and exclusively, as to keep back from view other great doctrines,—such, I mean, as the judgment, the resurrection, or our duty to God?"

Mr. F. "Of course not."

Mr. M. "But you *do* think that it ought to be brought forward according to the analogy of faith; as it is set forth in Scripture, and taught by the Church?"

Mr. F. "Exactly so."

Mr. M. "Well, then, we perfectly agree; and I believe agree, in theory at least, with the writer of that Tract."

Mr. F. "For what, then, has all this outcry been made about the Tract on Reserve?"

Mr. M. "Why, because the writer of that Tract considers that many preachers *do* bring forward, in their sermons, the doctrine of the atonement in a coarse and irreverent manner; and *not* according to the analogy of faith, as revealed in holy Scripture,

and set forth by the Church; but so as to exclude, or throw into the background, many other most important duties and doctrines. In fact, I think the charge of reserve, in the sense of suppressing important doctrines, may be alleged against your own party far more justly than against the Tractarians."

Mr. F. "Nay, we shun not to declare the whole counsel of God."

Mr. M. "It has often been my lot to hear evangelical preachers, and I never yet heard one of them preach the doctrine of reward according to works; very seldom that of the last judgment—at least, as it is revealed in Scripture; and as to the important doctrines of 'one baptism for the remission of sins,' and 'the holy Catholic Church,' I do not remember ever to have heard them allude to them."

"Well, well," said Mr. Flavel, not choosing to answer the charge; "you have said more in favour of the Tract on Reserve than I thought you could have done; but there is a still heavier accusation yet in store against your friends,—I mean, the sophistical manner in which they have explained away the Articles of our Church in Tract 90. What do you say to that?" This was addressed to myself.

"My dear sir," I replied, "you seem to address me as if I were one of the writers of those Tracts, or as if I were bound to account for every thing which they have written. But though I acknowledge a great load of debt to them—a debt far greater than I can ever repay; and though I am ready with my humble

voice to defend them when they are unjustly accused, or vindicate them when they are misunderstood, still I do not think them infallible; far from it. In particular, in Tract 90, I do not hesitate to say, that they appear to me to have disregarded their own motto: 'If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?' I consider that there is one real meaning, if we could but discover it, whether of a passage of Scripture, or of an article of the Church. And I can never admit that it is right to consider what a thing *may* mean: we ought to look to what it *does* mean."

Mr. F. "I must say that the reasoning in that precious Tract is the most sophistical and disingenuous thing I ever read."

Mr. L. "Nay; I do not go to that extent, though I think it over-subtle. I have too great confidence in the writer to suspect him for a moment of disingenuousness."

Mr. F. "Why, what do you say to his argument on the 22d Article? 'The Romish doctrine concerning purgatory... is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the same.' How does the Tract-writer interpret this? Why, he says that this article is levelled against the *Romish* doctrine concerning purgatory, and not against any other doctrine concerning purgatory. Can any thing be a greater quibble?"

Mr. L. "I confess, that when I read it, this view of purgatory appeared to me something like what

you say. It was quite contrary to the way that I had received it; which would account for my view of it. But on further consideration, I think the words of the article are fairly open to the Tract-writer's interpretation;—though I confess I do not consider his to be the true interpretation. Purgatory, as I understand the term, is a place of torment in which the remaining corruptions of justified persons are purged away: and I conceive that the article condemns this doctrine altogether."

Mr. F. "To be sure; and yet this writer quibbles till you cannot tell what he means."

Mr. L. "I think I can mention more remarkable instances of quibbling, and lax interpretation of the formularies of the Church, than any which you can find in Tract 90."

Mr. F. "I have no doubt you can. In which Tract are they?"

Mr. L. "Not in any Tract. But in some of the interpretations which the Evangelicals pretend to be the true ones. Especially, you must forgive me if I instance their interpretation of the language of the Church on baptismal regeneration. The Church declares, as plainly as language can speak, that the baptised infant is regenerated, and even thanks God for it; whereas some of your writers, in order to make the doctrine square with their own notions of justification, declare that the Church uses the language of charity, and that the infant is only hypothetically baptised. This, I must say, appears to me

a direct evasion of the words of the Church ; while the novel doctrine concerning the article on purgatory, consists only in giving the language of the article a different meaning from that which is usually given to it ; but which, grammatically taken, it is quite capable of bearing.”

Mr. Flavel did not immediately answer. I believe he had found out that the evangelical doctrine of regeneration was quite untenable. So I went on.

“ I lately met with another instance of lax interpretation, which appeared to me far more doubtful than any thing in that Tract. It is stated,¹ ‘ that when a minister undertakes that he will conform to the book of Common Prayer, the object of requiring this declaration is to secure the use of *the general form* of morning and evening prayer, and administration of the two sacraments, in opposition to other forms, or to the extemporaneous compositions of the minister. Essential and honest conformity is here meant, not a scrupulous adherence to petty ceremonies (!) which time may have rendered obsolete.’ Such a mode of interpreting the ministerial engagement as this, seems to me to open a door to any deviation whatever from the prescribed order. Who is to decide what are petty ceremonies ? If a clergyman may leave out the offertory in the Communion-Service, why not the consecration of the elements ? If he may omit the Athanasian Creed, why may he

¹ In a Letter from the Bishop of Worcester to the Rev. — Oldknow.

not also the Apostles' or Nicene? If he may neglect the service of the festivals, why not that on Sundays? If he may close his church on Ascension-day or Ash-Wednesday, why not on Christmas-day or Good Friday?"

Mr. F. "However, you will admit that the over-scrupulous attention to ceremonies has a tendency to popery, and that a spiritual worship is that which we should chiefly aim at."

Mr. L. "I advocate an exact conformity to the ordinances of our Church: first, for safety, because the deviation in one respect may lead to deviation in others; secondly, for conscience-sake, because I have solemnly engaged to perform them; and also because I think they have a direct tendency to cherish a spiritual worship when rightly performed, and no tendency to popery whatever."

I felt myself getting a little warm, and so resolutely closed my lips, and said no more to Mr. Flavel; but I will add, for the sake of my readers, that these accusations against Churchmen who desire to conform to what they have engaged, and especially the charge of popery and disaffection to the Church, is the most unjust, I might add the most impudent, thing imaginable, in men who are notoriously guilty of the most unwarrantable deviations from both the letter and spirit of the Church-service, and approximation to the habits of dissenters. What would be said of a clergyman who introduced into his service hymns taken from the Breviary? And yet the

Evangelicals use without scruple the compositions of dissenters. What would be said of a clergyman who employed in his parish members of the Roman Catholic communion, who had not been formally reconciled to the Church? And yet the Evangelicals continually avail themselves, both in their schools and district visiting-societies, of the services of persons who go alternately to the church or the dissenting chapel. What would be said of a bishop who stood on a platform with popish priests, and declared that he saw no great difference in their views, and cordially united with them in the propagation of the Catholic faith? And yet we know that the meetings of the Bible Society are continually bringing some of the heads of our Church into contact with dissenters. Will it be said that there is greater danger from contact with popery, and that some have actually gone over from high-Church principles to the Romish faith? I answer, that not some few only, but thousands, nay millions, have gone over from the low-Church and puritanical views to dissent. All the dissenters now in the land, or their fathers, were once puritans or evangelicals.

No; our only safe course is to keep strictly to our Church, without turning to the right hand or to the left. If we think one ordinance a petty ceremony, and begin to neglect it, we shall soon give up another and another. And to associate, for religious purposes, either with Dissenters or Romanists, except for the charitable purpose of converting them from

the error of their ways, is not only dangerous to our own souls, of evil example to others, but contrary to the plain letter of the word of God.

But, after all, why should we allow ourselves to go to extremes, either one way or the other? Why not keep to our own Church? Aristotle tells of a baker, who asked his employer whether he liked his meat overdone or underdone? "Why, cannot you do it right?" said the man. So, why cannot we, by God's grace, keep right? Why not keep to our Church? Why go off to either extreme? If we keep to what is written, we are safe; but once let us suffer ourselves to depart from the prescribed ordinance, and we know not to what lengths we may be carried.



He too is blest, whose outward eye
The graceful lines of art can trace ;
While his free spirit, soaring high,
Discerns the glorious from the base ;
Till out of dust his magic raise
A home for prayer and love and holy praise.
KEBLE.



CHAPTER XXIII.

The Church restored.

God's blessing continued to shine upon my parish. The steps which I had taken with regard to Mr. Monkton had a good effect on my parishioners, by convincing them that I had no leaning to the errors of popery ; but that my object was, the good of the Church of England, and of my own parish in particular ; that I was not aiming at any unauthorised changes or innovations, but simply the restoration of the Church as it is presented to us in those formularies to which we all acknowledge obedience.

There was one thing, however, which still annoyed me. Perhaps some may think the expression too strong, but I was positively *ashamed* of my parish church ; not the fabric itself, for that was ancient and handsome, with the exception of those parts which had been meddled with by modern churchwardens. But what annoyed me was the interior, which was utterly at variance with my ideas as to the proper arrangement of worshippers in the

house of God. Some few alterations I had made soon after my arrival. The font, for instance, which I had found in the angle between the porch and the south aisle, appropriated to the double purpose of catching the drippings from the spout, and affording the boys a convenient stone to sharpen their knives on—this was repaired, and replaced on its proper base, which was still remaining within the church; and the crockery basin, which had been for some time employed for the baptism of infants, was put away in the cupboard. Still, the inconveniences and improprieties which abounded in the church remained much as they were. The first object which caught the eye as you walked up the centre, was an enormous pile, consisting of the reading-desk for the clergyman, surmounting that for the clerk, and the pulpit towering above the rest, not unlike, as some one observed, to Ossa piled on Pelion, Olympus on Ossa. This portentous fabric of deal boards, which I have no doubt was erected during the churchwardenship of some carpenter, was placed exactly in the middle of the church, a little in advance of the chancel-arch, whereby the altar and chancel were obscured in such a manner, that neither could the congregation hear that portion of the service which is directed to be performed there, nor witness the consecration of the elements. The sides of the chancel, and a good portion of the rest of the church, were occupied by pews scattered in all directions, and not only utterly disfiguring the church, but occupying twice or thrice

as much room as was required for the families which owned them ; thereby very much curtailing the space allotted to the poor, and forcing them to sit or stand as best they could in the aisles and passages. Then there were galleries of all shapes and sizes. The principal one, which projected forward in front of the pillars of the south aisle, bore the following inscription :

This gallery was erected in the year 1750, and the roof ceiled ; the church having before been without gallery or ceiling.

John Burnet, Minister.

*Thomas Twist, }
Nathan Ouzle, } Churchwardens.*

In addition to all this, one of the principal pillars, which stood between two arches of the north aisle, had been removed by the late incumbent, who fancied that it impeded his voice ; (how its removal was accomplished, without bringing the roof of the church down upon their heads, I cannot imagine ;) and the place was occupied by a cast-iron post, which, compared with its neighbour, presented very much the appearance of an old Greenwich pensioner with a sham leg. Add to these, a variety of other abominations—such as, an old dingy Grecian altar-piece, with sham clouds soaring above it, blocking up half of the east window ; another window turned into a conduit for the iron-piping ; the king's arms obstructing one of the principal arches,—and you have some notion of the interior of High Kirkstall church.

I do confess that the state of my church considerably preyed on my mind—the more so, as I saw very little hope of remedying the evil, the expense being much beyond my own private means, though I was prepared to do a good deal ; and until the church was made fit for divine worship, I despaired of leading my people to enter entirely into its true spirit.

But an unexpected deliverance arose in the appointment of an excellent churchwarden, who undertook his office with the full intent of doing his duty, though not perhaps at the first aware of the extent of improvement which he was destined to effect. Mr. Dalton was a man of taste, with right principles to direct his taste, and the means to indulge it. It was not long before we came to understand each other as to the extent of the alterations which would be required, in order to make the parish church suitable to the increasing wants of the parish, and worthy of the great Being to whom it was consecrated. After a good deal of consultation between Mr. Dalton and myself, aided by an experienced architect, we resolved to lay our plans before the vestry. The church, as it at present stood, consisted of a nave, two side aisles, and a chancel, all well proportioned, and suited to the population of the parish when it was first built. But the number of inhabitants being nearly doubled, all sorts of expedients had been adopted to cram them together into the very limited space contained under the roof of the old church. The plan concocted between us was this,—to take

down the old chancel, and, in its stead, to build two spacious transepts and a new chancel, leaving the body of the church exactly as it was, with the exception of the removal of the galleries and ceiling, and the rearrangement of the pews. Some doubt occurred to us as to the propriety of interfering with the chancel, on account of its peculiar sanctity. But as it seemed impossible to accomplish our object of making the church suitable to the parish in any other way, and it was proposed to re-erect it after precisely the ancient model, this plan was adopted. When it was laid before the vestry, no one objected to the scheme itself; but a good deal of murmuring was made about the expense.

“Well,” said Mr. Dalton, “I have thought of that; and I will tell you how I propose to meet it. Mr. Leslie will rebuild the chancel at his own expense, and I will undertake to build the transepts, provided the parish will do what is wanting in the body of the church, and put it into thorough repair.”

This proposal was received with loud acclamations; and when Mr. Dalton, taking advantage of the enthusiasm of the moment, proposed a four-penny rate. “Come,” said an old parishioner, “let us do it handsomely. I propose that we shall make the rate sixpence in the pound.”

This was unanimously agreed to; and Mr. Dalton declared, that with that he thought they might make their church one of the best and most convenient in the kingdom.

The restoration of the church turned out even better than either Mr. Dalton or myself had anticipated; for in the course of the alteration, many parishioners came forward with subscriptions and aid in different ways, unwilling to lose the privilege of being partakers in the good work, or to give only just what the law required of them. One would present a handsome window of stained glass; another the Creed and Ten Commandments, with a rere-dos of carved stone-work. Another paved the chancel with encaustic tiles, manufactured for the purpose. And even the poorer sort clubbed together, and presented an eagle of richly carved wood.

After the expiration of eight or nine months, I had the gratification of performing divine service in a church which, as far as our poor efforts could avail, was worthy of Him to whose worship it was dedicated.

Perhaps some will ask, What was the use of all this trouble about rearrangement and ornament; this minute attention to sittings and kneelings, poppy-heads, eagles, stained glass, and all the rest of it? It might be sufficient to answer, that it was a worthier temple to God than it had been; and that it afforded His people the opportunity of making offerings, such as, if offered with humble faith, He would be pleased to accept. But if any do not feel the force of this reason, I will give them another, which to my mind would be in itself sufficient. The new arrangements in the church contributed in a great degree to the

most important object of *making the people worshippers, and not mere hearers ; a congregation, not an audience.* It had the effect of leading their minds to dwell on the fact, that they went to church to worship God, and not merely to hear a sermon or a psalm. Previously to the alteration, the impression conveyed by the interior arrangement was, that the people had met together for the sole purpose of listening to the minister, who occupied the great staring rostrum in the middle ; the very prayers seemed to be preached to them ; the Communion-service was scarcely heard. Now a modest, but sufficient, pulpit was erected close by the pillar of the transept ; and the whole space, from the western entrance to the altar was thrown open, so that the minister appeared to be, as he was, the leader of the people, as they addressed the throne of grace. *I had not lowered preaching ; but I had raised prayer.* The preaching was listened to with as much attention as ever, and cost me as much pains. But the people saw that it was not the sole, nor indeed the principal object ; that there was something even of higher importance, and more essential value. The consequence was, that the congregation naturally fell into the due proprieties of the service. They began to take a part in it themselves, much more than they had been accustomed ; the responses were uttered in an audible voice ; and the beautiful Liturgy of our Church began to be appreciated in its true character, as the purest and most suitable formulary in which a congregation can address

their Maker. Surely it was worth some effort and expense to bring about such a change. For I do not hesitate to say, that in the modern arrangement of churches it is next to impossible to effect this wholesome improvement. And the most minute attention to proprieties of arrangement are well bestowed, if they tend ever so little to so important an object.

It must not be supposed that, in bestowing this attention on my church, I have neglected other matters. On the contrary, I have a diligent and well-ordered visiting-society, consisting of many excellent members of my flock, who greatly aid me in my parish; and who, I am happy to say, of their own accord, have become constant attendants at the daily prayers, deeming that their active services amongst the poor and ignorant would be most likely to be successful, if sanctified by a holy worship.

My schools, if I may rely on the inspector's report, are in that condition in which they should be. All the children are taught their relation to God, and are trained to take a part in the Church-service, which they do with alacrity. The holy communion is, I believe, as well attended as in any other parish of the same dimensions; and I have a very considerable sum accruing from the weekly offerings at the altar; out of which, after the parochial necessities are duly provided for, a donation is sent at the end of the year to each of the principal Church societies.

But I feel a reluctance to appear to boast of my

own parish. I only cite these facts to shew, that attention to the ceremonial worship, far from contributing to the neglect of those active exertions which some appear so exclusively to value, has, on the contrary, the most beneficial influence, by sanctifying and promoting them.

I will therefore conclude with a few general remarks on the nature of the change which had been effected, and which I verily believe to be the principal thing wanted in most of our parishes, in order to bring our people into that condition which Christ Himself designed for His Church militant here on earth.

The view of a Christian congregation, that they are not only hearers of the word, and believers, but also *principally and essentially worshippers*, is borne out by the strongest evidence, both from Scripture and history. When the three thousand souls were converted on the day of Pentecost, and had obtained remission of sins in the baptismal font, what do they proceed to do? We read that they continued "in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers . . . And they continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart." In short, after being believers, *they became worshippers*. They did not cherish a mere reserved and inward faith; but they assembled together for frequent prayer and communion, besides exercising abundant almsgiving and self-

devotion ; and through these acts of religion their faith derived its sustenance and support. The same system of united worship and communion, which is the great feature of apostolic religion, was carried on by the early Christians, as it had been from the beginning. All things were made occasions for worship. The birthday, the circumcision, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension of our Lord, were honoured by united worship. Lent was set apart for fasting and self-denial, in commemoration of our Lord's temptation. The days on which the saints and martyrs were taken to their glory were kept as holydays and seasons of thanksgiving. All these various ceremonies, and many others which might be named, sprang from a fervent faith, and, in their turn, fostered the faith from which they sprang.

When the nations became Christian, and the kings and queens of the earth became nursing fathers and nursing mothers of the Church, and the Gospel was the religion of the rich and powerful, still the same system was continued, but in a nobler form,—more worthy of the honour due to the divine Head. The frequent worshipping was continued, but it was accompanied by a rich and solemn service. The gifts which God hath bestowed were rendered back to Him with gratitude. God's house was decorated with choicest architecture and rich embellishment. A well-instructed choir, aided by the notes of music, poured forth its praises and thanksgivings, or chanted the solemn litanies. The bishops and presbyters, with

their attendant deacons, assembled round the high altar, and in their turn addressed to the congregated worshippers such words of exhortation and instruction as they deemed suitable ; consisting, not so much of laboured oratory, as of grave and simple instruction from God's word. All this was the natural and proper development of that holy worship which is due to God from sinners washed in the blood of the Lamb, united to the body of His Son, and growing up to perfection in one external and spiritual brotherhood.

But, alas ! during days of luxury, corruptions crept into the Church, which were still more increased in days of turbulence and darkness. The most sacred rites were turned to superstitious uses ; the holy Eucharist itself desecrated to purposes of gain ; the just authority of the rulers of the Church converted into a temporal sovereignty ; and a formal ritual made the substitute for the ancient holy worship.

Then came the Reformation, whereby superstition was removed ; but with it, unhappily, came a division of system amongst the reformers. The Anglican Church simply removed the corruption which had crept in ; the Zuinglian, or Calvinist, deserted the Church, and constructed a new religion for themselves. The English Church retained the solemn Liturgy, the daily service, the fast and festival, the decent ceremonial, and adhered to the communion of her divinely appointed bishops. The Calvinists swept all away : deserted their bishops ; looked on God's Church as a mere roof to cover those who were in it ;

considered the holy Eucharist as a bare sign of something absent; substituted the effusions of some human teacher for the ancient form of worship; in short, converted Christian worship into an intellectual system, and made the assembling together in God's house a mere affair of preaching.

To this false system, the popular opinion, even within the English Church, has of late years too much leaned; so that the very construction of our modern churches gives the idea, not of a temple wherein to worship God, but a mere room for an audience to assemble. Long time and persevering exertion will be required to accustom men's minds again to the true system of the Church, as received from the apostolic ages. But the difficulties are not insurmountable, because, through God's merciful providence, *we have our English Prayer-book as a standard to refer to.* It is on that mainly that our preservation as a Church has hitherto depended; and that must be our chief instrument in effecting the restoration which is needed. If our Prayer-book be tampered with by *any party*, the glory of the English Church will have departed. But so long as we maintain that treasure inviolate, it will afford a basis on which to rebuild our solemn worship, and invigorate our languishing system with the spirit of purer and holier ages.

Great God, by whom the strifes of men are weighed
In an impartial balance, give Thine aid
To the just cause; and, oh! do Thou preside
Over the mighty stream now spreading wide!
So shall its waters, from the heavens supplied
In copious showers, from earth by wholesome springs,
Brood o'er the long-parched lands with Nile-like wings.
WORDSWORTH.



CHAPTER XXIV.

Recapitulatory Remarks.

THERE is at the present time an unusual ferment in the English Church ; God grant that it may turn out for her eventual furtherance and purification ! It may be called, in some degree, a reconsideration of principles. And yet it is not so, strictly speaking ; for the debate is between men who belong to the same communion, and profess to acknowledge the same great principles, and receive the same articles and formularies. All members of the Church confess the great doctrines revealed in Scripture and summed up in the Creed. All acknowledge the duty of man to live to the glory of God, who made him. All believe that, when man lay in sin, pardon and salvation were purchased for him by the blood of Christ the Son of God, who took our nature upon Him and suffered death on the cross, so that thenceforth all who believed in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And all acknowledge the sanctifying operation of the Holy Ghost, without whom we are not able to think or do any good

thing. These great truths of revelation are admitted by all, and understood, as doctrines, in the same way. The debate is on the *practical method of proceeding*—the way of setting to work in order to gain souls to Christ, and secure to them the benefits of Christ's precious blood-shedding, and the sanctifying influences of the Spirit, through which alone they may be enabled to glorify God.

The evangelical scheme (that, I mean, which is adopted generally by the party called Evangelical, in contradistinction to the Church-party,—for it is vain any longer to speak of them otherwise than as parties) is something of this sort:—They suppose the ordinary means of conversion to be preaching, or, it may be, reading Scripture. A man lives an ungodly or worldly life; he hears an impressive sermon, or portion of Scripture; bethinks him seriously of his dangerous and sinful state, and of God's mercy through Christ to perishing sinners; is struck by the great suitableness to his case of the justification offered through faith in Jesus Christ; believes; undergoes a change of heart; and straightway enters upon a new course of life.

To illustrate my meaning, I will instance the case of the Dairyman's Daughter, whose story is so beautifully written by Legh Richmond, and stated to be an actual case which came within the writer's knowledge. She was, as she herself confesses, "a proud, thoughtless girl, fond of dress and finery, and loving the world." She went to church more to see

and be seen, than to pray or to hear the word of God. She was in great darkness, and knew nothing of the way of salvation. *She never prayed.* She was a stranger to God and Christ. When in this awful state, she was induced, by "curiosity and the opportunity of appearing in a new gown," to go to hear the sermon of a missionary, who was detained by contrary winds. He preached an impressive sermon on the text, "Be clothed with humility," which touched her to the quick. From that hour she never lost sight of the value of her soul: she was led to see her lost estate as a sinner, and the great mercy of God through Jesus Christ. In short, she became a true penitent (or, as some would express the same thing, was converted); she learned to forsake the vanities of the world, and live to the glory of God; and became the means of bringing other members of her family to the same blessed state. We can have no doubt that she was in truth a lost sheep reclaimed to the fold, though her letters would seem to indicate some lingering symptoms (which, however, might be expected) of her former want of humility. The pen of Legh Richmond has thrown a charm over the story of this young woman: she is, in a manner, canonised as an evangelical saint; and her grave, at Arrington in the Isle of Wight, is visited by many devoted admirers.

Now I think it fair to assume, that the case of this young woman is that sort of case which is principally contemplated and admired in the Evangelical

scheme. John Bunyan's Pilgrim is an instance of the same sort,—a man who, having lived a sinful or worldly life, repents, and is saved. All their writings, in short, dwell principally on this mode of conversion.

And this, I say, is an essentially defective system. For is it not at once obvious how much *more* truly Christian—how much more lovely and excellent—is the character of one who serves God from his youth up? Might not the Dairyman's Daughter have been so trained up as to eschew the pomp and vanities of the world? Instead of *never praying*—instead of living without God in the world—might she not, if her parents had been themselves true and faithful Christian Church-people,—might she not have been taught in her infancy to walk in the faith and fear of God, and, like St. Timothy, so continue through life in those things which she had learned when a child?

And this is the great and primary object of the Church; namely, to unite the soul to Christ from the beginning. She is well aware how hard a thing is repentance when sin has been engrained in the heart. She knows what multitudes, who have wandered from their home, perish, like the prodigal in that far country, and never come to themselves, nor seek again their merciful God and Father. She therefore takes each child into her arms, and, by the use of Christ's holy ordinance, she confers on him a new nature by water and the Spirit; unites him at once

with the body of Christ, makes him an adopted child of God. Then, as soon as the intellect dawns, she informs him of his baptismal privileges ; tells him of the great mercy of God, and of the grace which had been bestowed on him ; and exhorts him to live according to that beginning, and perform the promises then made,—to renounce the works of the devil, the sinful vanities of the world, and the carnal desires of the flesh—(*not to turn from them and repent, but to renounce, that is, have nothing to do with them from the beginning*)—to believe what God has revealed, and do what He has commanded. Thus she leads him on in faith and holy ways. The seed of divine grace communicated at baptism increases and gains strength, so as to enable him to subdue sinful affections, and to serve God in his generation. He is taught to seek for grace and increased faith by prayer and holy ordinances, and especially by partaking of the body and blood of Christ, whereby his union with the Saviour is continually renewed. Not that any child of Adam ever remained without sin. Still, God's grace "is sufficient for him:" he may eschew worldly vanities ; may so cleave to God, through diligence and prayer, and other appointed means, as to live continually in His faith and fear.

This is the mode of winning souls to Christ, and keeping them, which the Church most approves. And if the Church-system were fairly carried out, who can doubt that thousands of her children might be so trained—thousands, who perhaps now are lost,

might be saved from falling into grievous sin, and taught to serve God from the cradle to the grave? Still, seeing it is certain, in the low state to which the Church of Christ is now reduced, and in consequence mainly of the erroneous views with which her children are trained, that the majority fall from their baptismal grace, the Church holds out to such the hope of repentance—a boon equivalent to that conversion which constitutes the chief part of the Evangelical scheme. The Churchman, like the Evangelical, preaches his awakening sermons, and makes his earnest appeals to those who have fallen from grace, accompanied by vivid manifestations of God's love through Christ to even the worst sinner. *The difference is, that whereas the Evangelical makes this the whole, or by far the most prominent part, of his scheme, the Churchman looks on it rather as a supplement, or last resort; and builds his principal hope on the preservation and carrying out of the baptismal grace, according to the scheme so plainly marked out in the services of the Church.*

Such appears to be the broad and essential difference between the Church-scheme and that of the Evangelicals. The Evangelical dwells almost entirely on *conversion*; the Churchman preaches baptismal *regeneration*, and, to those who have fallen, *repentance*.

Now it is obvious at once how defective must be a scheme like that of the Evangelicals, which thus practically loses the principal vantage-ground in the

spiritual contest. It is to be feared that the ordinary notion of conversion in middle life, even more than death-bed repentance, has been the destruction of multitudes. All acknowledge the great danger of trusting to a death-bed repentance; but I question whether the danger of trusting to conversion in middle life be not very much greater. If one has slain its thousands, the other has slain its tens of thousands; and this fallacious hope is evidently fostered by Evangelicalism. Not that the promoters of such opinions do so wittingly; on the contrary, they would indignantly deny it. Probably it is farthest of all from their intention. Nevertheless, they do, in fact, promote this most pernicious error, by the suppression of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and by the continual preaching of conversion as if it were the principal view of the Christian scheme, instead of being, as it really is, a last resort, which God, in His great mercy, holds out to perishing sinners. Thus they have given a false impression of the mode of salvation; and their hearers are beguiled by the notion, that they may spend their youth in pleasure and indulgence, and turn to God and repent in middle life. But, alas! repentance is a hard thing: far harder than the Evangelical preacher makes it. It may be the work of a life, if it be accomplished at all. Not that God's loving-kindness sleepeth; but that man cannot, will not, turn. Even if he seeks repentance at all, he deludes himself too often by an unreal repentance, which will not avail him. And

herein, I fear, he is too often encouraged, rather than warned against his danger, by the Evangelical preacher ; by whom those fruits of repentance, whereby alone true repentance can be shewn, are spoken lightly of. And so men are deceived. They think they repent, and do not half repent. They do not cut off the right hand, nor pluck out the right eye. They may listen Sunday after Sunday to an eloquent preacher, and contribute their guinea-subscriptions to those institutions which he approves, and give up some of the more flagrant vices or vanities of life ; but they do not renounce their self-indulgent, worldly habits. They scarce know that it is fit for them to do so. The man who, in token of his penitence, should, like Zaccheus, restore fourfold to those whom he had defrauded, or give half of his goods to the poor, would be regarded by the Evangelical world as a legalist ; and he who, like the penitent David, should weary himself with fasting until his knees were weak, or should rise at midnight, like our Saviour, to seek God in prayer, would be suspected of popery.

In a word, it is to be feared that Evangelicalism has so obscured the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and so unscripturally smoothed the way of repentance, that multitudes have been beguiled to their destruction. Multitudes have been destroyed, not so much by what the Evangelicals teach, as by what they leave untaught.

I have dwelt on this primary fault of suppressing

the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, because it is that which vitiates from the beginning the system of the Evangelicals. But it is impossible that so great an error can have crept into a system without shewing itself in many collateral or analogous points. I shall, therefore, proceed to mention several other doctrines in which their teaching is decidedly at variance with the words of Scripture or the formularies of the Church.

The Evangelicals know nothing, or at least preach and write nothing, of that mystical union between Christ and His Church, which is maintained by *the sacraments* in such a manner, that each child is by baptism, rightly received, grafted into Christ, and, after a mysterious manner, becomes, in the language of the Church, a member or limb of Him; and each one who faithfully receives the holy communion does “verily and indeed”¹ eat the body and drink the blood of Christ, and thereby dwells in Christ and He in him—is one with Christ and He with him.² This doctrine of union with Christ, which pervades the whole of the New Testament, especially the Gospel of St. John, the Evangelicals set aside or misrepresent, attributing it to faith without the sacraments; whereas the Church, following Scripture,

¹ See the Church Catechism. “Q. What is the inward part or thing signified? A. The body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s supper.”

² See Exhortation in Communion-service.

attributes it to the sacraments faithfully or duly received.

Again ; they are unsound in the doctrine of *justification by faith*. As with regard to other doctrines they fall into deficiency, so in this they run into excess. They hold it in the same manner as those held it whom St. James rebukes in his Epistle ; that is, so as to obscure or undervalue other important doctrines.

For instance, they do not preach, unless it be to explain it away, the vital doctrine, that " God will *reward every man according to his works*," as declared in our Lord's own words ;¹ and that " they that have done good shall go into life everlasting, and they that have done evil into everlasting fire," as set forth in the Creed. Hence the great decay of good works in the present state of the Church.²

¹ Matt. xvi. 27.

² The way in which Evangelicals explain away God's revealed truth of a *judgment according to works*, is truly awful. That all men will have to appear before God's judgment-seat, to give an account of their works, they admit ; but maintain that the result of this inquiry into their works will be, *that all will be condemned*. Then will come a *second* inquiry, whether they *believe or no*.

Surely no one whose mind is not absolutely wedded to the *one* doctrine of justification by faith, to the exclusion of all the rest of revelation, can fail to see the sophistry of this statement. When it is written, that " the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father, and *reward every one according to his works*" (Matt. xii. 31) ; and again, " I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be "

Again; they most unduly depreciate the ordinances of religion. In most instances they utterly

(Rev. xxii. 12); can the Holy Spirit mean to teach us that, when judged by their works, all will be condemned, and *none* receive a favourable judgment? We know for certain that such will not be the case. For in our Lord's description of the day of judgment, it is declared that He *will* say to *some*—"Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. *For* I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat" (Matt. xxv. 34, 35), &c.; and again, "God will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in *well-doing* seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, *eternal life*" (Romans ii. 6). Here it is expressly said, that eternal life will be given to some for their patient continuance in well-doing.

What an awful perversion of Scripture, therefore, is it to lead any to suppose that they may hope for salvation, if they continue in such a course of life as will receive God's condemnation at the judgment of the great day! How grievous to think, that instead of being encouraged to seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, by a patient continuance in well-doing, men are told that all they can do will avail them nothing!

Yet this is the doctrine that one hears preached by those who make all religion to consist in justification by faith; and are determined, for the sake of their theory, to shut their eyes against the plainest doctrines of the Bible, which do not seem exactly to square with it. Instead of doubting the truth of their system, or suspecting for a moment that they may not be able to discern the depth of Scripture truth, they wrest and torture every thing which appears to them inconsistent with their views. If they describe the terrors of the last day, and the awfulness of the thought, that all our deeds, words, and thoughts, will be laid bare before our Judge, instead of going on to exhort men to holy deeds and a godly course of life, their conclusion is: But never mind, all of us will be in the same plight; saint and

neglect the Fasts and Festivals ordered by the Church, and so deprive their flock of their natural food ;

sinner, all will be condemned : only let us take heed that we believe, and all will be right.

One source of this most fearful error is, that they apply *to the judgment* such arguments as St. Paul uses to induce men to believe and come to Christ. St. Paul argues, in the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans, and elsewhere, that all are concluded under sin : therefore let them come to Christ, and they shall be justified by faith. But is this meant to apply to the judgment? Surely not. Then, God expressly tells us, the question will be, how have we availed ourselves of our Christian privileges? What have we done *since we came to Christ*? The Evangelical says, "*only believe.*" The Apostle says, "*Add to thy faith virtue ;*" and to virtue every other Christian grace and good work. With one, faith is only the beginning of a Christian life ; with the other, it is every thing.

Another error—but this seems affected—is to suppose that, if we are to be rewarded according to our works, works are meritorious. Nothing is more untrue. Whatsoever we do acceptably to God is not of ourselves, but through His Spirit working in us ; and after all we can do, we are still unprofitable servants. Still God is so merciful as to accept us in Christ, and reward us according to our poor services. It is by these that the sincerity or reality of our faith is tested. If we have done no good works, it is a proof that our faith is dead and valueless. Let none, therefore, dare to do a deed, or speak a word, or even cherish a thought, which will not abide the judgment. But by a patient continuance in well-doing, by the humble use of all appointed means, whereby we may obtain that grace which is sufficient for us, let us strive daily to serve God in humble faith, and become holy even as He is holy ; and let us be assured that we shall in no wise lose our reward. (Matt. x. 42 ; see also 2 John 8 ; Heb. xi. 6, 26 ; Col. iii. 24 ; 1 Cor. iii. 14 ; Luke vi. 35 ; Matt. v. 12 ; vi. 4 ; xvi. 27.)

while all the time they preach against ordinances, and, what is still stranger, complain of those who observe them, as departing from the instruction of the English ritual.

They are unsound in the doctrine of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church, confounding it with that of the communion of saints, or the invisible Church, holding it in a different manner from that in which it has been held by the Church universal from the beginning, and adopting the doctrines of the dissenters.

They associate with schismatics on the platform and elsewhere, contrary to the express command of Scripture; and by so doing, and by the near approach which they make to the doctrine and practices of the dissenters, they have confused the minds of the common people as to the duty and necessity of union with the Church, and the sin and danger of schism. This conduct has been the main cause of the lamentable state of schism and religious discord to which the nation has been reduced—schism which, alas, has been communicated to our colonies in distant lands, and spread by our influence through the world, so as to impede the advance of Gospel-truth, and render the union of the Church more hopeless than ever.

The means which the Evangelicals adopt for the promulgation of their views are extremely objectionable, and exhibit the spirit of partisanship or sectarianism. While other members of the Church are

endeavouring to rebuild the houses of God, and enlarge the habitations of His tents, the Evangelicals have employed large sums in buying livings in the principal towns in a simoniacal manner. I do not mean that they could be convicted of simony before a court of justice, though it might be desirable that the question should be tried. But, in a religious and Gospel sense, they are clearly guilty of this crime. Simony consists in trafficking in religious functions. The sale of livings in the English Church is generally defended on the ground that it is a mere transfer of property ; not of the spiritual office, but of the property or estate. But those of whom we are speaking purchase the living, not for the sake of the property, but *solely with a view to the spiritual function*, and in order that they may obtain for one of their own party the power of exercising the ministerial office in that place. They are therefore guilty of simony ; and ought, if God grant them the grace to be aware of their sin, to give up the patronage of their livings to the bishop in whose diocese they are situated.

They have also induced many charitable persons to subscribe to a society called the Pastoral-Aid Society, the *professed object* of which is to supply curates in populous places ; but the *real effect*, to supply curates who hold Evangelical doctrines ; care being taken that, previously to the nomination of any curate to the bishop, satisfactory evidence shall be given to the committee on that point : the result aimed

at in both these cases being to secure the occupation of the most important pulpits to men who shall preach the objectionable and defective doctrine above described.¹ In these and other methods do the Evangelicals busily inculcate their doctrines, giving up to a party those energies which should be devoted to the Church.

But it will be asked, Why should not Evangelicals propagate their views, if they consider them to

¹ It is very remarkable, that an almost similar plan was adopted by the puritans, just before the great rebellion ; and, indeed, contributed not a little to that great national crime. Many livings had been impoverished by lay impropriation—that is, by the transfer of the tithes into lay hands—insomuch that it was difficult to get them served. A committee or society was formed, for the purpose of buying up these lay impropriations, and restoring them to the livings. Such was the excellent object *proposed* ; but the *real* object was, to obtain funds for the support of puritan preachers in populous places ; the appointment being kept in the hands of puritans, who took care to nominate preachers of their own persuasion. The result was, that *the religion of the townspeople and of the country people became, so to speak, different*. The country people kept mainly to the religion of the Bible and Prayer-book ; the townspeople were led astray to “ another Gospel ” by the vehement harangues of the puritan preachers. Nothing can be more dangerous than this difference of religious feeling. We see what it led to at the great rebellion. Is there not, at the present time, an obvious tendency to a similar result, if the appointment of the preachers in populous places is suffered to be in the hands of self-constituted societies or committees, whose religious views are so near akin to those of the old puritans ?

G G 2

be the genuine truths of the Gospel? Certainly; if they consider them so, they act rightly in propagating their views, provided they do it by honest means. But this is no more than may be said of the Socinians, or Papists, or Socialists. If, as I have already shewn, the views of the Evangelicals are essentially defective, they who propagate them in any way are responsible for so doing, much more they who do so by the means described.

It may appear to some that these accusations are penned in a spirit of harshness. I trust not; yet I acknowledge that I feel some indignation. I used once to respect the Evangelicals. Notwithstanding the manifest deficiency of their scheme, I have been accustomed to regard them with a certain respect, on account of their zeal, and the partial good which they have doubtless been the instruments of effecting. And there are some for whom I still feel a sincere regard,—men whom I see quietly doing the Lord's work according to their judgment. Zeal in a good cause is to be admired, even though it be not according to knowledge. They have also numbered amongst them many revered and excellent men, who have devoted themselves sincerely to the cause of what they considered truth. Indeed, it is for their sake mainly that the party to which they belonged has gained its influence and credit.¹

¹ I think, however, it cannot be doubted, that many who have added the greatest lustre to the Evangelical cause would, if they had lived now, have been very good Churchmen. The

But their popularity has spoiled them, as it has done thousands before them. They have now stood forward in a new light. They are no longer contending for the souls of men, but struggling to maintain a waning popularity. They see growing up around them, perhaps settling in their own parishes or neighbourhood, a zealous and laborious body of men who have devoted themselves to restore the ancient energy and purity of the Church. These men are gradually gaining an influence over the public mind, to the prejudice and annoyance of the Evangelicals. Hence their rage against them; and because these men blame as defective the effete Evangelicalism of the day, they are accused of being enemies to the Reformation; and because they endeavour to re-

following extract from Cecil's "Remains" might almost have been found in some *catena patrum* of the soundest English divines:—"Man is a creature of extremes. The middle path is generally the wise path; but there are few wise enough to find it. Because papists have made too much of some things, protestants have made too little of them. The papists treat man as all sense, and therefore some protestants would treat him as all spirit. Because one party has exalted the Virgin Mary to a divinity, the other can scarcely think of that *most highly favoured among women* with common respect. The papist puts the Apocrypha into his canon, the protestant will scarcely regard it as an ancient record. The popish heresy of human merit in justification drove Luther, on the other side, into most unwarrantable and most unscriptural statements of that doctrine. The papists consider grace as inseparable from the participation of the sacraments: the protestants too often lose sight of them as instituted means of conveying grace."

store the ancient usages of the Church, which have been sinfully neglected, they are accused of popery, and held up as departers from the Church's discipline by men who err themselves in a tenfold greater and more dangerous degree. The effrontery with which these men accuse their brethren is marvellous. The daily newspapers and monthly magazines have been filled with false charges and injurious reports against those who are endeavouring to raise the tone of religion. Instead of that generous rivalry which ought to influence men engaged in the same great cause of winning souls to Christ, there has sprung up amongst the Evangelicals a bitter hostility and ungenerous jealousy; they bar the kingdom of heaven against men; they neither go in themselves, nor suffer those that are entering to go in. And not only is the public mind excited and prejudiced by the press, but even more objectionable means than these are resorted to, and the bad arts of political partisanship are called into operation. I have at this moment before me a speech made by an Evangelical clergyman at a large dinner-party, composed of the tradesmen of his parish, which for violence and ill feeling goes beyond what one is accustomed to hear even at a gathering of democrats, and in which the holiest truths are treated with a contempt which must have rejoiced the heart of the infidel.¹ To such a

¹ The following is a specimen :—"These are what the Puseyites consider the *desiderata* in the Church of England worship (*hear, hear*). Shall we go back to these mummeries? If we are

state of mad excitement are these men brought by the spirit of partisanship.

to have the oil and chrism, shall we have the spittle and salt? Are we to have our children *spit upon, and salted, and pickled*, instead of being simply sprinkled with water in baptism? Away with such dishonest innovations! The Puseyite writers, in a tract on Catholic antiquities, say, that if the people are taught that the Church condemns these observances, they will naturally leave its communion. Then he (Mr. C.) would at once say to Mr. Newman, Mr. Williams, and all others holding similar opinions, leave its communion as good Mr. Sibthorp has done, who was too honest to remain among you (*deafening cheers*). If you dare to hold up one hand in favour of popery, sign your renunciation of the Protestant creed with the other (*cheers*). No longer hold your fellowships of colleges, your professorships, and your livings in a Protestant Reformed Church (*cheers*). He cautioned his hearers to be on their guard against those who told them that Dr. Pusey was such a good man, that Mr. Williams was such a nice man, and that Mr. Newman was equal in goodness to them both: these good men are all the while introducing the grossest superstition into the Church of England (*hear*). He entreated them not to be led away by sentimentality and superstition, and painted windows to please the eye. He knew a beneficed clergyman of this diocese who not long since refused to be present at the consecration of a new church, because it was not built due east and west! In these degenerate days, when churches are built all sorts of ways, it would be necessary for a clergyman to carry a mariner's compass in his pocket, to know where to turn when he said his *paternoster* or his *credo*! (*laughter*.) The *Times* newspaper, for some reason or other, has lately chosen to take the part of these Puseyites, Newmanites, or *Newmaniacs*, as it had been suggested to call them. A friend of his informed him that he knew several clergymen in the north of England who had refused to pray for the Prince of Wales until after his Royal Highness was baptised,

Under these circumstances, my feeling with regard to this party is changed. I no longer respect them as I used. They have assumed the attitude, not only of violent partisans of a defective system, but they stand forth as opponents of those who would raise the Church to her true position; and thus are fast approaching the sin of antichrist, and liable to the judgment of those who impede the

and this too in defiance of the commands of our most gracious sovereign (*tremendous cheering*), and the express directions of the Archbishop of Canterbury. He did not wish to say one word in disparagement of the holy sacrament of baptism: as a father, he should be very uneasy if any one of his children had gone unbaptised; but he should not be afraid or ashamed to pray for them before they had undergone that ceremony. Such unfeeling superstition he utterly repudiated: these men, these clergymen, are wolves in sheep's clothing. The Protestants must speak out; they must drive from out the Church the man of sin, who, in the mystery of iniquity, has insinuated himself into it. He (Mr. C.) took it as a token for good, that the good, and pious, and protestant King of Prussia, the representative of the Protestant religion and the reformed Churches in Germany, was that day received with kingly honours by the British parliament (*hear, and loud cheering*). And yet, in the cant and hypocrisy of Puseyism, this same King of Prussia, as true a Christian in heart and mind as ever lived, was no Christian at all, because he had not been baptised in an Episcopalian church. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Queen have poured contempt on such doctrines by the selection of his majesty, Frederick William, as sponsor to the little Prince of Wales (*thunders of applause*).” Such are the poor clap-traps by which an Evangelical clergyman condescends to deceive his parishioners.

truth. And yet there are still amongst them excellent, true-hearted men, who, if the prejudice of early years were withdrawn from their eyes, might be foremost in the Church's ranks. Such men we would earnestly entreat to separate themselves from those by whom their cause is disgraced, and rendered offensive in the eyes of all quiet and peaceable Christians. They joined themselves to this party perhaps in times when its leaders were earnest men, who wrought for the glory of God and for the souls of their fellow-sinners, not their own vain-glory and influence. Such men will always gain love and esteem. Those who are sincere, be they of whatever party, will carry with them the feelings of others. Hence it is, that many who have been awakened from sin by the preaching of the Evangelicals, attribute to their peculiar views the effect which God wrought through their earnestness and zeal. Experience now shews that Church-views, set forth with equal sincerity, carry with them the feelings and affections of men, and win them from evil ways quite as much—yes, and more so than Evangelicalism did in its most palmy days. Let those, therefore, who respected the Evangelicals for their former zeal, now render the same confidence to men whose earnestness is equal to theirs, and whose views are more perfect.

But there are many also who stand aloof from the contest, who say, There are extravagances and errors on both sides—we will have nothing to do

with either. Such persons, however, I would beg to consider, that *the errors of the Evangelicals are the errors of their system; the errors of Churchmen are but the extravagances or indiscretions of a few.* In all great contests there is a right side and a wrong. The Evangelical system is defective in itself; and all who embrace it are defective in their views of religious truth. The Church-system, set forth in the Prayer-book, is the true system of revelation, though some who embrace it run into extravagance. This, of course, is too bold a position not to require some farther proofs to support it. I maintain, therefore, that the unsound and defective views, which I have specified as characteristics of the Evangelical party, are shared by all who belong to that party. *All* Evangelicals are unsound in the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and in the doctrine of the one Catholic and Apostolic Church. Not one only here and there, but *all*. All confound the doctrine of the visible Church with the communion of saints; and all refuse to receive, in its true and natural sense, the doctrines of the Church respecting baptism. All, more or less, exalt the doctrine of justification by faith, to the disparagement of other great doctrines,—though some more than others. All cry down ordinances, and more or less neglect the fasts and festivals appointed by the Church. It is these characteristics which constitute the Evangelical party. Those who do not hold these views are not Evangelicals. On the contrary, the characteristic

feature and connecting link of Churchmen, is a conformity to all the doctrines and ordinances of the Church. It is true that some indiscreet individuals have gone into extremes; but these are repudiated and disapproved of by the great body of the Church-party. So, in the writings of Churchmen error and extravagances may be found. There are, as I believe, many errors in the Tracts for the Times; but these errors are not received or admitted by the great body of Churchmen. The ninetieth Tract is very generally disapproved of by those who, on other grounds, admire, almost revere, its author, but who think that in this, as in some other cases, his ardent spirit and acute mind have led him into error. I say, then, that the Church-party, by which I mean the great body who are labouring to restore the Church to her true position, are not responsible for these errors or indiscretions—in fact, disapprove them. But, on the other hand, that it is the errors of the Evangelicals that make them what they are, and link them together in a body.

And this is but the same circumstance which takes place in all great divisions of opinion. At the time of the civil wars, for instance, the royalist party were in the main right, though some of them were guilty of extravagances. The rebels were essentially wrong as a party—wrong by virtue of their principles and actions, though there might be amongst them some good men. So in the political division of the present day. And thus it is in the great con-

H H

test of opinion which now divides the Church. The Church-party is in the main right, though some of its adherents may have fallen into error. The Evangelical party, though numbering some good men amongst it, yet is, in the various points already set forth, essentially defective. *Let no one, therefore, think it safe to stand aloof.* It is a false view of moderation to suppose it to consist in the mean between existing parties. If a Socinian and a Churchman were to dispute, the one declaring that Christ was "very God," the other, that he was mere man, it would be a most dangerous step to take the Arian view as a mean position, and believe that, though more than man, he was less than God. So as regards the contest between the Church and the Evangelicals; they who stand aloof, or occupy a mean position, have no right to congratulate themselves on their moderation, unless they can prove that the position which they occupy is the true one. To say that it is between existing extremes, is no positive recommendation, but only an excuse too often used for lukewarmness. True moderation consists in choosing the right side with judgment, and maintaining it with a Christian spirit.

Of course, those whose opinions and practices are here animadverted on will, if they think it worth their while, have much to say in defence, and many reasons to allege, which will probably satisfy themselves, though it will be hard for them to disprove the allegations brought against them. But my

statements are intended for those persons, in every class of life, whose minds are perplexed by the present state of the Church, and who are anxiously in search of truth. There are thousands of excellent persons who, more or less, have joined in the forward movement made by the Church, who have been led recently to think seriously on the true nature of the Church, and her sacraments and ordinances, and have begun to taste the blessings and privileges which, through them, God offers to the faithful,—persons who, without entering deeply into theological controversy, have yet been convinced in their minds, and moved in their best feelings, by the great truths presented for their acceptance. To them it is that I address myself. They have been staggered, it may be, and checked in their advance, by the calumnious outcry which has been raised; they have been taught to look on the extravagances of a few unstable persons, or the too refined speculations of others, as the characteristics of that earnest, devoted body, to which, from conviction as well as feeling, they had felt well disposed; and so have been deterred for the present from that cordial co-operation with the Church's best friends, to which they had been before inclined. To these persons I address the words of common sense. I do not so much appeal to controversial arguments as to palpable facts. I bid them look into their Prayer-books, and read the Baptismal Service, together with the Church Catechism and the Confirmation Service; and

ask themselves whether the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is not as plainly stated as words can state it, and whether it is not made the basis and starting-point of the Church's scheme ;—and then I bid them reflect what must be the extreme error of that party which denies or explains away this fundamental doctrine, and even *mutilates* the formularies to suit their purpose ! I request them also to see whether a regular series of fasts and festivals is not enjoined by the Church ; and then I bid them admire the effrontery of those men who, while they neglect these injunctions, accuse their brethren who obey them of introducing novelties.

It is for the body of Churchmen to decide which portion of their clergy they will trust in as their spiritual guides : those who are using their zealous endeavours to restore the Church to the state in which the reformers placed her ; or those who advocate an unfaithful concession to the lax practice of a corrupt age : those who bid them receive their children pure and regenerate from the baptismal font, and exhort them to cherish the divine spark of grace, and train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord ; or those who practically lose this vantage-ground—who deny, or explain away and suppress, the most gracious gift which, for His Son's sake, and through the influence of His atonement, God has given to man.

There can be no doubt that a great crisis in the Church has arrived. The two systems are, in a

manner, on their trial before the nation ; and it rests on each individual member to decide whether he will aid the good work which has begun, or be found amongst those who vainly set themselves against it, and endeavour, by unworthy means, to check the efforts which the Church is making to restore herself to her true position. For, in spite of all opposition, appearances plainly indicate that a spirit has spread through the land which no force or power can curb—a spirit which, if it may at times break forth with indiscreet zeal, yet it is too deep and true to be coerced. While human nature remains imperfect as it is, the best principles will be carried out to excess, human motives will intrude into the holiest cause ; nay, the best and ablest will sometimes act, and speak, and write unadvisedly. Where is the heart or intellect that is without its failings ? Still, in spite of the weakness of human advocacy, the cause of Christ and of His Church appears to those who think most deeply, more near arriving at a great and wide-spreading influence than it has been for many generations. *The alternative is, to remain as we are, or rather gradually to grow worse ;* for neither churches nor nations long remain stationary. Evangelicalism has had its sway for the last half century ; and we see what have been its accompaniments. Schism arrived at such a height as never was before known in the Church ; infidelity scarcely less formidable—the mass of the people knowing absolutely nothing of the relation in which, as bap-

tised Christians, they stand to God, and not believing if you tell them; one or two, it may be, here and there, brought to repentance, but the masses lost in worldliness and sensuality. Such is the state—I do not say to which Evangelicalism has brought us, but from which it is utterly powerless to raise us. And never until this defective system is set aside, and the true system of the Christian Church established in its place—never until the exclusive preaching of the doctrine of conversion be discontinued, and our children are taught from their infancy the relation in which they stand to God as His adopted sons, and the duties they owe Him, and are trained from their youth up in His faith and fear by the holy system which the Church prescribes—never until then will the Church attain her rightful influence as the guardian of the souls of men, and lead them, through the quiet paths of godliness in this world, to the inheritance prepared for those who seek the Lord.



1639-80
LONDON:

PRINTED BY LEVEY, ROBSON, AND FRANKLYN,
Great New Street, Fetter Lane.

825G866
OB

AUG 18 '85



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

wils

825G866 OB

Gresley, William, 1801-1876.

Bernard Leslie; or, A tale of the last t



3 1951 002 099 104 M



Minnesota Library Access Center

9ZAR05D03S15TKL